NEW
NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Ave., N. Y.

No. 518 NEW YORK, DECEMBER 1, 1906. Price, Five Cents

A DANGEROUS WOMAN

OR

NICK CARTER FACES A CRISIS

By THE AUTHOR OF NICK CARTER

The next instant the woman's hands were bearing at Nick's throat, and despite his great strength he was borne backward to the floor, while Madge brought down the handcuff upon his head.

NEW
NICK CARTER
WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, *79-89 Seventh Avenue, N. Y. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.*

No. 518. NEW YORK, December 1, 1906. Price Five Cents.

A Dangerous Woman

OR,

NICK CARTER FACES A CRISIS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A TELEPHONIC TANGLE.

The telephone-bell rang out sharply, and Nick Carter wheeled his chair around and put the receiver against his ear.

"Hello?" he said.

There was no reply.

"Hello?" he said again, and waited; but still there was no response.

"*Hello?*" he called out again; but nobody responded, so he replaced the receiver, shoved the instrument aside and resumed his reading.

It was half-past ten o'clock in the evening.

Twice, while he was going through the succeeding chapter in the book before him, he turned toward the telephone with a puzzled expression on his face, and finally, when he had finished the chapter, he put the book aside and pulled the instrument around in front of him.

"Hello, central?" he said. "My telephone rang a few moments ago, but when I responded to it there was no answer. Could you tell me where the call came from?"

"It was a call from Morningside central, sir. I remember it," was the reply.

"Very good. Give me Morningside central, please."

As soon as he got the connection, he said:

"Morningside, will you let me speak with the young lady, or the operator who asked for my number, fifteen or twenty minutes ago?" And he gave the number.

"I am the one who asked for it," was the reply.

"Thank you. There was nobody at the phone when I answered. Can you tell me who sent in the call?"

"The call came from 10,301 Morning, sir. Are you Mr. Carter?"

"Yes."

"There was something rather strange about that call, sir."

"Indeed! What was it?"

"I intended to listen to what was said, but I was busy."

"As it happens, there was nothing said. What was strange about the call?"

"Perhaps I had better get the number for you, sir."

"Tell me first what it was that you thought strange about the call, please."

"The call came from a young lady, sir; at least, so I should judge from the voice."

"Well?"

"It was a very sweet voice, although its owner seemed to be greatly excited. She said to me: 'Oh, central, please hurry, won't you? I haven't a moment to lose. I may be caught at the telephone before I have a chance to say a word. I want Mr. Carter—Nick Carter, the detective—and I don't know his number. Will you get him for me, please?'

"Well, sir, I got your number as quickly as I could, and all the while she was begging me to make haste. Then I rang you up, and from force of habit turned off the switch so that I could not hear what was said. Another call came in at that moment, and when I did open the switch again, I heard nothing; so I decided that you were through."

"When I responded to your ring," said Nick, "I received no reply at all. The young lady had left the phone."

"I don't think she would have left it voluntarily, sir, from the way she spoke to me."

"I suppose you heard nothing more than you have stated, did you?"

"No, sir; that is all."

"The young lady did not mention any name?"

"No, sir."

"Give me 10,301 Morning, please; and after you have done that will you do me the favor to ask your bureau of information for the city address of that number?"

"Yes."

After a moment of waiting a masculine "Hello!" came over the wire to the detective.

"Are you 10,301 Morning?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

He gave his own telephone number, and then he said:

"A call came to me from your number, less than half an hour ago, and when I replied there was no one at the phone. Can you tell me who called?"

"Nobody called from this number, sir," was the astonishing reply.

"Isn't it possible that you are mistaken about that?" asked Nick. "The central tells me that the call came from your number."

"Then central made the mistake; not I."

"I am Nick Carter, the detective. Will you tell me exactly why you are so positive about it, please?"

"Yes, Mr. Carter. I have charge of the switchboard here. The last call that was made from here to-night was at 9:40, and the call itself was the Hotel Astor. There has positively been no call from here since that one."

"You have not been absent from your post since that time?"

"No, sir. I have not left this chair. I have been sitting here reading all that time."

"A call could not have passed through your switchboard without your knowledge?"

"Certainly not."

"What is the city address of your telephone? Where are you?"

"The 'Inverness' apartment-house—116th Street."

"Oh, yes; I know. Thank you. Now, one more favor."

"Yes, sir."

"Will you tell me your name? I may wish to talk with you further about this."

"Certainly, sir. My name is Philip Harris."

The detective thanked him and hung up his receiver; but after a moment his bell rang again, and this time it was central, who informed him that the address he desired was at the "Inverness" apartment-house, in 116th Street.

"I say, central," he remarked, after he had thanked her, "I wish you would be rather on the alert for another call from that same voice, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if you should hear it again, please ask at once for the name of the young lady."

"Yes, sir."

The detective resumed his book; but after a few moments he put it aside with some show of impatience.

"I don't know why that thing bothers me," he murmured, "but it does. Telephones are certainly a great blessing to humanity, but they can be infernally puzzling at times."

He resumed his reading again, and presently became so interested that he forgot the incident of the telephone.

He turned page after page and read chapter after chapter of the book until he was suddenly brought back to the realities of life by another ring at his phone.

Involuntarily he glanced at the clock as he turned to take the receiver from the hook, and noticed that it was half-past twelve.

"Hello?" he said, over the wire.

"Hello? Is this Mr. Carter?" There was suppressed excitement in the voice.

"Yes."

"I am central. There has just been another call, Mr. Carter, and I am convinced that something dreadful has happened."

"Tell me all about it, please, as plainly as you can," said Nick.

"It was only just now, sir. The same number dropped—I am Morningside, you know."

"Yes; and the number was 10,301."

"Yes. It was the same voice, Mr. Carter. She said: 'Central, I haven't a minute. Please tell Mr. Carter for me that Doris Granley is——' Did you get that, sir?"

"Yes. What more?"

"She stopped right there, sir. I heard a half suppressed scream and a noise of something falling, as if a chair had been thrown over. Then the receiver was replaced on the hook, and that is all I know about it. That is, it is all I know about that particular part of it."

"Tell me what you mean by that."

"Why, sir, this: I instantly rang up that number—10,301."

"Yes."

"A man replied to it. It is the man who attends to that switchboard. I know his voice."

"Well?"

"He insists that nobody had sent in a call over his wires, and that he knows nothing about any young lady sending in any call at all to-night."

"Are you entirely positive that the call came to you from that number?"

"Absolutely so, sir."

"Are your wires working all right? Is there any possibility that a wire is crossed with another somewhere?"

"No, sir. We would know it here if that were so."

"Well, if you hear anything more, let me know, please."

"I will, sir."

The detective was more than puzzled now; he was alarmed.

"Doris Granley," he mused. "What in the world could Doris Granley be doing in that part of the city at this time of night?"

He seized the telephone again, and called for another number of the same exchange as his own phone—the residence of Mrs. John Aldershot—Doris Granley's aunt.

"Hello!" said Nick, when the answer came. "The residence of John Aldershot?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who is at the phone?"

"The butler, sir. I switch it into my room at night."

"Can you tell me if Lady Doris Granley is at home?"

"I believe she is, sir. Do you wish her called? It is hardly——"

"No. I am Nick Carter. You say you *believe* her to be at home. Don't you *know* whether she is or not?"

"I am reasonably positive about it, sir."

"I think, Simpson, that I will ask you to call Mrs. Aldershot to the telephone, even though the hour is late. Tell her that Mr. Carter wishes to speak with her at once, and that it is important. I will hold the wire. I would like you to hurry."

There was a wait of ten minutes, and then the calm tones of Mrs. Aldershot inquired:

"What is the trouble, Mr. Carter?"

"Is Doris at home, Mrs. Aldershot?"

"Certainly. What a question!"

"Nevertheless, I wish you would go at once to her room and make sure. Don't stop to ask questions, please. I will hold the wire."

He could hear her as she hurried away, and two minutes later he could hear her returning rapidly; and then in a voice which trembled with fright she said to him:

"Doris is not in her room. The bed has not been disturbed. Some of her things are missing. What *does* it mean!"

"I will go around to your house at once, and try to find out what it means," replied the detective.

CHAPTER II.

A MOST UNACCOUNTABLE CIRCUMSTANCE.

The detective had only to put on his hat, gloves, and overcoat to be ready for the street. It was night, and snow was falling outside—had been falling, in fact, since three o'clock the preceding afternoon.

It was considerably less than two months since Lady Doris Granley, heiress to a large fortune, had been restored to her rights, and now it would appear that she was again threatened with danger.

The Aldershot residence was not far from Nick Carter's home and he very quickly arrived.

Mrs. Aldershot—Doris Granley's aunt—was a woman who rarely lost her self-possession. It was second nature to her to remain calm under trying ordeals, and therefore she was not excited as some women would have been under the same circumstances. She was very pale, and also greatly troubled; but with her usual dignity she led the detective at once to the library, where a fire was burning in the grate, and asked him to be seated.

"I have not disturbed my husband as yet," she told him. "I thought it best to wait until you arrived, Mr. Carter."

Nick nodded.

"Simpson and I are the only ones in the house who know, so far, that anything is wrong," she added.

He nodded again.

"When did you last see Doris?" he asked. "What time was it?"

"I haven't seen her since dinner—about half-past seven o'clock," was the reply.

"How is that, madam?"

"I went out immediately after dinner. I did not return until eleven. Doris had retired, then—that is, I supposed she had."

"Did you make inquiries?"

"No. It did not occur to me to do so."

"Do you know if she thought of going out this evening?"

"I know that she did not have such an idea, Mr. Carter."

Nick stepped to the door and called to the butler.

"Simpson," he asked, "what time did you last see Lady Doris?"

"Half-past eight, sir."

"Where was it that you saw her at half-past eight?"

"In the front hall, sir. She passed me on her way upstairs, and bade me good night. She had a book in her hand which she brought from the library with her."

"As if she intended to read for awhile after she went to her room."

"Yes, sir."

"She did not come down again?"

"Not to my knowledge, sir."

"Were you absent from your post after that time, until the return of Mrs. Aldershot?"

"No, sir; not once."

"Then she could not have come down again by way of the front stairs without being seen by you, could she?"

"No, sir."

"But she might have gone down the back way without your knowledge?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did anybody call here during the evening, Simpson?"

"No, sir; not a soul. Usually——"

"Well?"

"Pardon me, sir; usually there are callers during an evening, but to-night the storm was so severe that nobody came at all."

"Were there any calls over the telephone during the evening?"

"Two, sir."

"What were they?"

"The first one was from Mr. Lawrence Hamilton, sir. It came before my lady went up to her room. He asked to speak with her and I called her to the telephone, sir. I do not know what passed between them."

"Certainly not. Mr. Hamilton will tell me that. Now——"

Mrs. Aldershot interrupted.

"Larry was intending to call here to-night, Mr. Carter," she said. "I suppose he must have been prevented from doing so and that he used the telephone to make his excuses."

"No doubt. Now, Simpson, what was the other call, and when was it?"

"It wasn't a call at all, sir. It must have been a mistake."

"How was that? Tell me about it."

"It was about eleven, I think, sir. Anyhow, it was just before Mrs. Aldershot returned. She came in only a few moments afterward."

"What about the call itself?"

"Why, sir, only this: I heard the ring and went to the telephone. I called hello several times, but nobody answered me so I returned the receiver to the hook and came away."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, sir."

"You heard no voice at all?"

"No, sir."

"And nothing else happened?"

"Nothing."

"Did you hear any noise that you did not understand?"

"No, sir."

"Nothing whatever occurred to attract your attention particularly?"

"Nothing."

"Mrs. Aldershot, will you go with me to Doris' room?"

"Yes. At once. Come."

She led the way and then soon entered the room—or, rather, the rooms, for there was a private suite of three of them; a boudoir, a bedroom, and a bath.

There was not the slightest indication of any disturbance anywhere in any of the three rooms.

The book that Doris had been reading was lying open on the table near the open grate, and another book had been laid across it to hold it open, as if the act had been done deliberately, indicating no suggestion of haste. The bed had not been disturbed, proving that if she had been interrupted, it had happened before she had thought of retiring.

"How was Doris dressed when you parted with her, Mrs. Aldershot?" asked the detective.

"Very plainly; very simply. In an ordinary house gown."

"Did she wear slippers, or shoes?"

"Slippers."

"Will you look among her things and tell me if she changed anything before she went out; and will you tell me what is missing from her wardrobe?"

"Her maid could inform you better on that subject, Mr. Carter."

"We will call the maid presently. First tell me what you can about it, please."

After a short inspection Mrs. Aldershot replied:

"I think that two of her gowns are missing, besides the one she wore. Her jacket and furs are not here. Her street hat is gone and I think there are other things missing, also."

"And the slippers she wore?"

"They are not here."

"Simpson," said Nick—for the butler had followed them to the room—"will you call the maid?"

When Simpson had departed, he asked Mrs. Aldershot:

"Has there been any disagreement between you and Doris?"

"None whatever. Indeed no!"

"You know of no reason why she would leave the house secretly, of her own accord, do you?"

"No, Mr. Carter."

The maid entered, looking very much frightened.

"What time did you last see Lady Doris?" asked Nick, addressing her.

"At a quarter to nine, sir."

"How did you fix the time?"

"I looked at the clock, sir, when she dismissed me for the night."

"That clock?" asked Nick, pointing to one which stood on a chiffonier.

"Yes, sir."

"It is fifteen minutes slow," said the detective, glancing at his watch. "From that we may judge that she was still in the boudoir at nine o'clock. Was she seated in that chair at the table when you left her?"

"Yes, sir."

"Reading?"

"Yes, sir."

"Just what was it that she said to you?"

"I came to inquire if she needed me as soon as I knew that she had gone to her room. When I entered she said to me: 'I shall not need you again to-night, Agnes. You may retire at any time you like. I shall read until I get sleepy.' Then she said good night and I went out."

"Where did you go?"

"To my room, sir."

"Where is that?"

"In the servants' quarters on the top floor of the extension, sir. There is a bell from Lady Doris' bedroom to mine so that she can summon me in the night if she wishes to do so."

"Your bell did not ring after you left her?"

"No, sir."

"Did you leave your room again after you went to it upon leaving your mistress?"

"No, sir. I retired at once—that is, I undressed at once. I put out my light about half an hour later, I think."

"Were you also interested in some book?"

"Yes; I am fond of reading when I get the time."

"That will do for the present," said the detective, and he turned again to Mrs. Aldershot.

"When you came to these rooms at the time I telephoned to you," he asked, "were any of the lights switched on?"

"No. The rooms were in darkness."

"Thank you. Simpson, I will have to ask you to call the other servants. We must know if Lady Doris went out by the back way, or if anybody entered by that way."

"I will assemble them in the servants' dining-room, sir."

"Do so; and call me when they are ready to see me."

Twenty minutes later he entered the servants' dining-room, and, turning to Simpson, he asked:

"Are they all here, Simpson?"

"Yes, sir. Every one."

Taking them all in with one comprehensive glance, he asked:

"I wish to know if any one of you saw Lady Doris anywhere in the house, or out of it, after nine o'clock last night, or near that time?"

There was no reply.

"Did any of you see a stranger in the house at all last evening?"

Again there was no reply.

"Lady Doris has mysteriously disappeared. Can any of you throw any light on the subject at all?"

Silence was again the only response.

CHAPTER III.

NICK CARTER FACES A PROBLEM.

"Who attends to fastening the back of the house?" asked the detective.

"I, sir," replied Simpson. "I always attend to it. I never retire until I know that everything is secure and that all the servants are either in their rooms or accounted for."

"Were any of the servants out after hours last night?"

"No, sir."

"Who among you remained down-stairs after nine o'clock last night?" asked the detective, again addressing them generally.

A chambermaid and one of the footmen responded.

"What time did you two go to your rooms?" asked Nick.

"At half-past ten, sir," replied the footman. "Mary and I are engaged to be married, sir, and that is the hour that Simpson sets for us to leave off, sir."

There was a very general smile at this; but the detective continued:

"Can either of you give me any information on the subjects I have already questioned you about?"

"No, sir," they replied, in unison.

"Are the others in the habit of retiring to their rooms so early?" asked Nick.

"I can reply to that, sir," said Simpson. "Last night was what you might call an off night, sir. It was storming outside. Mr. Aldershot had gone to his study, which is off from his bedroom, and had left orders not to be disturbed. Mrs. Aldershot, as you know, sir, went out immediately after dinner to call upon a friend who is ill. Lady Doris retired to her room at half-past eight,

and so I sent word by Clarence, the footman, sir, that the servants might dispose of themselves as they pleased. They are good servants, sir, all of them, and I try to make everything as pleasant for them as I can."

"Then I think I may dismiss you," said the detective to all of them. "If any of you should happen to recall anything that touches upon this mystery, I trust you will inform Simpson at once so that I will know of it."

When they returned to the library, the detective said to Mrs. Aldershot:

"Your husband is the only person in the house who has not been questioned. I think I will ask you to call him now, if you please."

She departed on the errand at once and presently Mr. Aldershot, arrayed in dressing-gown and slippers, entered the room:

"Your wife has told you what has happened?" asked Nick.

"Yes, Carter. It is most astounding!"

"Did you see Doris after dinner last evening?"

"Not at all. I went at once to my room. I had some papers I wished to examine, and I did not leave my room after I entered it. I smoked and worked over the papers until after midnight—five minutes it was, after twelve, when I put out my light."

"So you can throw no light whatever on the subject?"

"None whatever."

"Mr. Carter," said Mrs. Aldershot, at this point, "you have not told me yet how it happened that you telephoned to inquire if Doris was in her room. How did you know that she might not be there?"

The detective began at the beginning then, and related the episode connected with the telephone.

"How do you explain it all, Mr. Carter?" asked Mrs. Aldershot.

"It is impossible to explain it at present, madam," replied Nick. "It seems very evident, however, that Doris did not leave her room willingly, or unaccompanied; or, if she did so, that she must have been waylaid outside the house. She went somewhere, or she was taken somewhere, where there is a telephone. She attempted to use it knowing that she would be interfered with—and she was interfered with. She made at least three attempts: Two, to communicate with me, and one to communicate with some one in this house. But the strangest part of it all is that the call should have appeared to come from a number on the Morningside exchange, but that the operator at that number should have no knowledge of the circumstance."

"It is possible that he deceived you."

"That is true—only I do not think so."

"It is all very mysterious," she sighed.

"It is."

"Do you suppose, Carter," asked Mr. Aldershot, "that this can have any connection with the other affair? That Madge Morley-Kidder-Bundy business?"*

Nick was silent a moment, and then he replied:

"I am very much afraid that it has, Aldershot. I regret now that I did not follow up that woman at the time. It did not occur to me that she would be dangerous after that."

"But her confederates—Sir James Bundy and Sir Eustace Kidder—are in prison, are they not?"

"Yes."

"What are we going to do about it all, Carter?"

"I am going to find Doris. You know how dear she is to me; as dear as she is to you. She represents something very much the same as a daughter to me, Aldershot."

"Yes. I know that."

Nick wheeled suddenly to Simpson, who with the freedom of an old and privileged servant, and one who loved the family he served and was loved in return, had remained in the room with them.

"Switch on every light on this floor, Simpson," he ordered. "Then take me around the house. I wish to examine every door and window of this floor and—well, every place where a person might have effected an entrance from the outside. Come."

But every door and window was locked. Nothing had been disturbed apparently.

"Let us go outside the house at the rear," suggested the detective.

It should be explained here that the house was situated on the corner and is what might be called semidetached; that is, there was a space two feet wide between it and the one adjoining, this space being filled to a height of twenty feet from the ground by a wall of brick.

From the rear of the house a wall twelve feet high and surrounded by wrought-iron points extended to the rear of the lot on which the house had been built, and thence along the back of it, and again approached the house at the opposite side of the lot. The garden, or yard, thus created was approximately fifty feet in width by about the same depth.

The snow was still falling when Nick passed into this yard, and, of course, if there had been traces of footprints there at all that night, they had long since been covered.

But they had scarcely entered the yard when Simpson uttered an exclamation of surprise and pointed toward a delicately framed ladder which extended from the ground to one of the rear windows of the second floor.

"I was just about to ask you if that ladder is always left there," said Nick.

"I never saw it before in my life," replied Simpson.

*See NICK CARTER WEEKLY No. 517, "Doris, the Unknown."

"No? Then it must have been brought here to-night."

"That is certain, sir."

The detective was examining it while he talked; then he said very quietly:

"It is an extension-ladder, Simpson. It is apparently frail, but it is very strong and capable of sustaining considerable weight. Look."

He removed it and then, by undoing several clamps, he presently held in his hand a compact package four feet in length, which did not weigh to exceed twenty pounds.

"Good!" he said. "We know now how Lady Doris left the house. It was through that window, which is not very far removed from her own rooms. Is there a gate through that wall, Simpson?"

"Yes, sir. I locked it last night before dark."

"Let's have a look at it. Ah! I thought so. You see the lock has been broken."

"But from the outside, sir."

"Yes. You did not suppose that Lady Doris left the house alone, did you?"

"No, sir."

"Somebody came here to get her, Simpson. That person brought the extension-ladder. That person broke the lock at the gate, placed the ladder in position, climbed it, entered the room where Lady Doris was engaged in reading, intimidated her, compelled her to follow or rendered her unconscious—which is not likely—and bore her away through the window, down the ladder and out at the gate again—and the snow has left no traces. Come; bring the ladder inside and close the door."

Nick returned to the library and related what he had discovered.

"And now," he said, "I advise you to return to your beds. There is nothing that either of you can do to-night. I don't suppose you will get much sleep, but you may as well try."

"And you, Carter? What are you going to do?" asked Mr. Aldershot.

"I am going to find Doris," he replied, with a snap of his jaws together. "I don't know where, or how, or when, just now; but I will find her. I will communicate with you as early as possible during the day. In the meantime, try not to lose courage."

"But——"

"Good night—or, rather, good morning," he said; and was gone.

Outside the house he turned northward, walking rapidly until he found a belated cab and then he had himself driven to the club of which Lawrence Hamilton was a prominent member, and where, being a bachelor, he lived much of the time, although he owned a mansion in the city and at least three country seats.

As soon as he was admitted and had explained the importance of his visit, he was conducted to Hamilton's rooms; and his friend, roused from a sound sleep, gazed at him blinkingly and in some amazement.

"What the devil, Nick!" he began; but the detective interrupted him, plunging at once into the subject that had brought him there.

"Larry," he said, "you telephoned to Doris last evening, didn't you?"

"Yes; but what in——"

"I'll explain in a moment. Answer my questions, please."

"Fire away. But I must say——"

"Did she reply to you in person?"

"Yes."

"What did you telephone to her about?"

"Why, about an engagement that I had with her to call there to-night. I found at the last moment that I could not go, and so I called her up to make my excuses. But——"

"Hold on, can't you? I want to know what it was that prevented your going? What interfered with your engagement?"

"I don't think that that is any of your——"

"Yes, it is. What was it?"

"Well, it was a devilish puzzling affair, to tell you the truth. I received a telegram as I was on the point of leaving the club. It was from Chris Morton, my cousin, who is always getting into scrapes and calling for me to help him out—which I usually do, always do, in fact, because I promised his mother, my aunt, that I would."

"Well, what was the message?"

"Chris wired that he had been arrested for something or other and was at the East 126th street station-house. He wanted me to go there and get him out."

"And you went?"

"Yes; but Chris wasn't there—hadn't been there, and they knew nothing whatever about him."

"I see. I understand, now. You were called off to get you out of the way."

"Nick, will you be good enough to explain what is the matter?"

"Yes; I'll explain now. And after that I want you to answer a lot more questions."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAKE NOBLEMAN.

The explanation made, to the amazement, consternation, and terror of Lawrence Hamilton, for it may as well be admitted at once that he was very much in love with Doris and hoped to make her Mrs. Hamilton notwithstanding the fact that he was more than ten years her senior, the detective resumed his questioning.

"First," he said, "I suppose it is generally know among

your friends that you are in the habit of calling at the Aldershot's Wednesday evenings?"

"I haven't disguised the fact, Nick."

"And so, when this storm came up about three o'clock yesterday afternoon and the people who abducted Doris decided that it was the very night for their work, they discovered that in order to carry out their plans successfully, you must be kept away from there; eh?"

"If you look at it in that way—yes."

"And therefore they concocted the little scheme of sending you a telegram signed with the name of your cousin."

"But, Nick, all that presupposes two things, neither of which it seems to me would have been known to the plotters."

"You refer to knowledge of your private affairs; to your habit of calling on Wednesday evenings at that house, and to your known foolishness in regard to that scapegrace cousin."

"Yes."

"My dear fellow, everybody who knows anything about you at all, is aware of both those habits of yours."

"But how in blazes are those fellows who have perpetrated this outrage to know anything about me at all?"

"That is something that we will have to leave to the future. For the present it is sufficient for us that they did know, and that their plans were laid accordingly. Now let us look at the matter logically."

"I wish to Heaven you would!"

"In the first place the abduction of Doris is evidently the result of weeks of careful planning. The plans made, it only remained to await a favorable opportunity. It is not every night in the year that it would be possible to enter the Aldershot house undiscovered. In fact, there are very few nights in the season of society when such a thing would be at all possible."

"That goes without saying."

"There are few nights when Doris is at home—until very late; for there are always dinners or receptions or parties to attend."

"That is true enough."

"And when the household is at home, the house is usually astir until very late."

"Go on."

"So, the plans for the abduction being made and everything for carrying it out being in readiness, the only necessary ingredient to make the dish complete was a favorable opportunity—a propitious night; like last night."

"Yes."

"When the storm began at three o'clock in the afternoon, they said to themselves that the opportunity had come; that the night would be propitious. The only fault with it was that it was Lawrence Hamilton's night for making his call, and they knew that no storm would keep you away."

"They were quite right about that, at least."

"Very well. In studying out their plans they found it was necessary to take you into consideration. You were a factor which they had to overcome."

"I don't exactly see it; but go on."

"In studying you they discovered not only that you were in the habit of calling at the home of Doris each Wednesday evening, but also that you had a weakness—we can call it by no other name—of going to the rescue of your no-account cousin at all hours of the day and night. There was their key, if the propitious opportunity and night should happen to occur on your night for calling."

"Gee! Nick, you should have been a novelist instead of a detective."

"So the telegram arrives at your club at just the right time, after they are certain that the storm is going to be sufficiently severe to serve their purposes. By the way, have you found out where your cousin happened to be at the time you received that message?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At home, and being very good. He was quite indignant, too, when I showed him the message. I thought—and he thought so, too—that somebody with devilish poor taste had been perpetrating a joke."

"All right. So much for that. Now let us get at another point."

"Well?"

"I suppose you always have quite a number of out-of-towners on hand who hold guest-cards at this club, haven't you?"

"No more than any other club."

"Have you been especially social with any of that ilk lately? Within the last four weeks, let us say?"

"No. I got to know one chap quite well, some time ago. He has been gone at least two weeks, however."

"That makes no difference. Did he happen to be an Englishman?"

"Eh? No; he was a Canadian."

"It is the same thing for our purposes, for an Englishman could readily pass as a Canadian."

"What has his nationality got to do with it, anyhow? And what has a guest of this club got to do with it?"

"I am merely reasoning that in order to study your habits as one of the factors in the project, some one in the interest of the conspiracy got himself put up here as a guest for the allotted two weeks, made your acquaintance, pumped you, and——"

"Confound it all, Nick, am I such an infernal idiot as all that?"

"You weren't idiotic. You were simply imposed upon—by the Englishman."

"Why an Englishman?"

"Because Madge Morley is English."

Hamilton bounded from his chair.

"Madge Morley!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that this is *her* doing?"

"I haven't a doubt of it, Larry."

Hamilton seated himself again.

"It would never have occurred to me," he said.

"Why not? Next to me you were the one who was chiefly instrumental in her undoing in her other scheme of personating Doris. When she went away from New York—if she did go away at all—she had it in for all of us; for you, for Doris, and for me."

"I suppose so."

"Besides, Larry, I am satisfied that she was more to be reckoned with than I supposed at the time of her escape. You know that somebody broke into my house, and you know what occurred there, don't you?"

"Yes."

"It was the work of an exceedingly expert burglar, who had the very best of tools. I am satisfied that neither of the baronets now in prison did it. Who, then, did do it? Why, none other than Madge herself, disguised as a man. She may have been a concert-hall singer in London, but if she was, she held down the job only to disguise her real calling, which was housebreaking."

"Go on, Nick. You interest me."

"We have seen her play the lady and we know that she can do the act to perfection."

"That we do."

"It follows, therefore, that she has pals among the men who can play the same sort of part in the same perfect way."

"And you mean——?"

"I mean that she wouldn't have pals of that sort in this country. They would be English pals."

"By Jove! I guess you're right."

"Of course I am right. What would be easier than for one of them to live at the Waldorf or the Mammoth for awhile, and to scrape acquaintance with one of the members of this club—yourself, for instance—and so get himself put up here?"

Hamilton burst out laughing and for a moment he continued it immoderately until Nick stared.

"What is the matter, Larry? A touch of hysteria?" he asked.

"No; I am laughing to think what an ass I have been."

"How so?"

"I put the fellow up at the club myself. I see it all now."

"What! the Canadian you were talking about?"

"No; another fellow. A real Englishman. A swell, too. Called himself Lord Ashburton. Pax introduced me to him in the café at the Waldorf one day. After that he cultivated me. Oh, I see it all now as plain as day."

"Glad you do."

"He made me like him, too."

"Naturally. That was his business."

"Capital chap. Good story-teller. Invited a lot of us to his shooting-box in Scotland. I came near to taking him around to the Aldershot's, too."

"And you put him up here at the club?"

"Sure."

"Tell me how that happened."

"Why, one day, when I met him at the hotel, we somehow got to talking about clubs, and I remarked that I thought our New York clubs were away ahead of the London ones. It ended in my bringing him around here to dine with me—and, of course, before he went out I gave him a guest-card."

"Worked it beautifully, didn't he?"

"He certainly did."

"And what about the Canadian, Larry?"

"Nothing particular, only as I remember it, he pumped me pretty dry, too."

"Possibly they were in league."

"I haven't a doubt of it now."

"Whose guest was he?"

"Paxton's."

"Do I know Paxton? Oh, yes; I remember."

"Everybody knows Paxton and nobody ever takes him seriously. But he's a member here. I suppose he met the Canadian the same way he met Ashburton."

"What was the Canadian's name? I mean the name he wore while he was here?"

"Gordon. Posed as a younger son, and all that. Highly connected, you know."

"Were the two men here at the same time?"

"Yes."

"Well, Larry, you have got to alter your useless life for an active one, for a time, for I am going to transform you into a detective. You have got to work on this case with me from this out."

"Gee, Nick! May I?"

"That is the program."

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE IN 111TH STREET.

The detective remained with Lawrence Hamilton until the servants of the club were astir, when they ordered an early breakfast, after which Hamilton directed that a small trunk of his be sent to the Grand Central Station, and having told his valet that he was going out of town for a week, and that he would not require the services of his man, and leaving word at the desk to hold his mail until his return, he left the club with the detective and both were driven—presumably—to the railway.

Instead of that, however, they were taken directly to the house of the detective, where Nick speedily transformed his friend into a respectable-looking, middle-aged country banker, and himself into a presumable merchant from the same locality.

Then they went together to the Hotel Mammoth, where they registered under assumed names, and secured adjoining rooms.

Nick's idea in doing this was to give the abductors of Doris, if they happened to be on the watch, the impression that each of them had left town before being made aware of the disappearance of Doris.

All of these preliminary arrangements were completed by nine o'clock in the morning, and a few moments after that hour Nick left Hamilton at the hotel, with instructions to do nothing more than loaf around the corridors until his return, while he himself hastened to the "Inverness" apartment-house, on 116th Street.

He wished to solve, if possible, that mystery about the telephone messages.

Once before in his experience a circumstance that was almost identical with this one had happened in relation to a telephone, and on that occasion he had by investigation discovered that a secret and unknown telephone had been introduced on a line by cutting a wire and carrying a loop from it to the hidden resort.

He had no doubt that he would discover that the same old trick had been resorted to in this instance.

It was half-past ten when he arrived at the apartment-house, for his progress had been slow owing to the storm that had now passed; but he lost no time in beginning his inquiries, the first result of which being that he was convinced that the young man who attended to the switchboard had told him the truth.

Next, accompanied by the superintendent of the building, he "ran down" the wires from that switchboard, but only to find that they had not been tampered with—or, at least, he could not discover that they had been.

Having questioned the superintendent thoroughly, he also became convinced that every tenant of the house could be accounted for, and he finally left there more puzzled than ever.

"How in the world," he asked himself, "is it possible that another telephone should drop that same number?"

He could not answer the question, so after leaving the house he went directly around to the exchange and asked for the manager.

The manager proved to be a young woman of more than ordinary ability; but when Nick, after binding her to secrecy, revealed his identity and explained the reason for his call upon her, she shook her head and replied that it was as great a mystery to her as to him.

But suddenly she gave a little start, and said:

"Wait. Let me look up the record of that number."

She went into her small private office and Nick followed her.

"You have some idea about it?" he said to her, as she seated herself at the desk and selected one of the books it contained.

"Yes," she replied. "One moment, please."

Nick waited, and presently she remarked:

"Mr. Carter, no matter how systematic a business may be, I suppose mistakes are always likely to happen, are they not?"

"Most assuredly."

"Well, sir, here is a circumstance where it is possible that a mistake may have occurred."

"Tell me about it," said Nick.

"I find," she continued, "that the telephone number, 10,301, was given to the 'Inverness' only about a month ago. Before that it was the call at a private house in 111th Street."

"Well?" inquired the detective. He had not the least idea what she was getting at.

"I remember now, perfectly, the day when the notification came to us to remove telephone 10,301 from 111th Street; and I also remember that we had a new lineman on duty that day; what we call a relief—a man who had temporarily taken the place of our regular man. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"It was I who sent him out on the removal order. He returned a couple of hours later with the telephone. I remember also that I was very busy at the time—it was the first of the month—and that I O. K.'d his order. That was the only day he worked for us here. I have not seen him since. The regular man returned to duty the next day."

"I confess, Miss Duncan," said Nick, "that I do not understand you."

"What I mean to tell you is this," she replied. "The old telephone which bore the number in which you are interested, was removed from the house in 111th Street. I was myself very negligent of the matter at the time. Now, sir, it is possible that if a telephone were surreptitiously adjusted to the wire in the house at 111th Street, and the connections were not broken here, in this exchange, as it should have been, that the house call would drop down the same number as the 'Inverness' call. Do you understand me now?"

"Perfectly."

"If you will wait here, sir, I will return in a moment."

She left him in the small office and was absent, perhaps ten minutes. When she returned, she said:

"I hope, sir, that you will not find it necessary to report this affair at the main office; but I think I can assure you that those mysterious calls came from the house in 111th Street;" and she gave him the street number.

"The matter will never be heard of again," he as-

sured her. Then he thanked her and hurried away toward the address in question.

When he arrived in front of the house, he saw that it was plastered with signs of "To Let," bearing the addresses of various agents; and, selecting the one that was nearest to him, he hastened there.

It was not long before he had secured a key to inspect the house and was back again.

One thing about the appearance of the front of the house had impressed him as remarkable, and that was that the snow had been neatly cleared away from the front steps, while other houses in the vicinity—even some that were inhabited—had not yet received that attention.

The atmosphere of all deserted houses is much the same, and especially so in midwinter.

The dreary chill which strikes one upon entering such a house cannot be mistaken; but the instant that Nick Carter passed inside of this one he was aware of the fact that the desolating chill was not there.

He sniffed suspiciously, being aware that somewhere in the house there had lately been a fire, to give it warmth.

He passed into the parlor, but that room was utterly bare.

He ascended the stairs to the second floor—and paused on the landing before a half-open door; then he stepped forward and entered the room.

There was nobody there, to be sure; but it was instantly evident that somebody had been there, and that not very long ago.

There was an open grate in the room, and in it a hard-coal fire was glowing. It had almost burned itself out, but it was there, and the room was yet comparatively warm.

There was a cot in one corner, and some bedding, also. There were several chairs, also, in the room. A small table stood in the middle of the floor, and upon this was a bottle, still half filled with Scotch whisky, an empty siphon, and three glasses.

There were cigar ashes and half-burned matches scattered on the floor, there were stubs of cigars in the ashes under the grate where several half-smoked cigarettes had been scattered among them—and there were several wet spots on the floor near the door, showing that some person or persons had entered that room from the street since the beginning of the storm, and had, therefore, tracked snow in with them.

And there was a telephone against the wall near the door.

Nick lifted the receiver from the hook, and received an instant reply.

"I wish to speak with the manager," he said. "Tell her it is Mr. Carter."

"Yes, Mr. Carter," came the response. "I am Miss Duncan. I was waiting for you."

"Thank you," he said. "I am in the house in 111th Street. Would you like to have me remove the telephone and take it around to you? Or will you send somebody to meet me in the street in front of the house?"

"I will do that," she said; "and thank you very much."

The detective was satisfied that the birds had flown, and that they would not return to that house.

He knew that they had detected Doris in the attempt to make use of it, and doubtless realized that they would be speedily tracked down if they remained there; so they had decamped, and they had even taken the precaution to sweep off the front steps in order not to leave behind them traces of their footprints.

But Nick was satisfied that three persons besides Doris had been in that room during the night that had just passed, and he had no doubt who they were, either.

"Madge Morley, the Englishman who called himself Lord Ashburton, and the Canadian who passed under the name of Gordon," he told himself; "and expert burglars, all," he mused, in conclusion.

But they had left no traces behind them other than those already outlined; and these told the detective nothing of their later movements.

He returned to the hotel after delivering the telephone to the man whom he found waiting outside, and asking him also to leave the key and a message with it for the agent of the house.

"I found the nest to which they took Doris last night," he told Hamilton; "but that is all I did find. They had made good their escape sometime during the night."

"What I cannot understand, Nick," said Hamilton, "is what plan they have in mind in abducting Doris. Why did they do it?"

"There may be any one of half a dozen reasons," replied the detective; "or each one of them may have its bearing on the case."

"Well?"

"There is the first one of revenge. I know next to nothing about the woman Madge, but the little that I do know leads me to think that she would go a long way for the sake of revenge."

"No doubt of it."

"In stealing Doris away, she gets square with all three of us at once. If she can wring ransom-money out of one of us, she makes it profitable at the same time. If she can force Doris into a marriage with one of those men who are with her, that would be still another play; and—now brace up, Larry—if it happens to occur to her she can quietly murder the poor girl, or she can condemn her to a fate that is even worse."

"Great Heaven, Nick!"

"I knew that I would startle you, old man, but it is best that we should look the matter squarely in the face.

Doris Granley is in great peril. She could not well be in greater danger than she is at this moment. We must lose no time in finding her, for I believe that the woman into whose power she has fallen will stop at nothing.

"Come in!" he called, for at that moment there was a summons at the door.

It was Ten-Ichi who entered the room, and he carried a letter in his hand which he gave at once to his chief.

CHAPTER VI.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ENEMY.

The detective broke the seal and read the letter aloud:

"'If Nick Carter, the detective, is wise, he will at once appreciate the wisdom of the advice contained in this letter. It is written by one who knows him, and whom he knows, and whose identity he may be able to guess; but that is neither here nor there.

"'He will have been made aware, by this time, of the disappearance of Lady Doris Granley, and if he guesses the identity of this writer, he will realize something of the danger in which that young lady now stands.

"'The writer does not fear Nick Carter; in fact, he is despised by the writer; but it is also known that in pursuit of his spying profession, he has amassed a considerable fortune. The writer wishes to become possessed of a part of that fortune, and it is therefore proposed to return Doris Granley to her home and friends unharmed, on payment of one hundred thousand dollars in cash to the person who now has her in charge. This can be accomplished only in one way, which is as follows:

"'A young girl—a child of the streets—will call at the basement door of the detective's residence at three o'clock this afternoon. She will bear a note addressed to Nick Carter. The note will read: "In fulfilment of the agreement." Nick Carter will then give to the child a package containing 100 one-thousand-dollar bills. If the child should be followed, or if any effort is made to discover to whom, or where she delivers the money, all efforts having in the restoration of Doris to her home will be abandoned, and she herself will be sentenced to a fate which to her will be infinitely worse than death itself.

"'The child will know nothing of what she takes to Nick Carter's house or what she takes away from there, so it will be fruitless to capture her, or to attempt to secure information from her. She will have no information to give.

"'There will be no more letters, and no other communication with Nick Carter than this.'"

Nick finished the reading of the letter and then raised his eyes to Hamilton.

"What do you think of it?" he asked.

"Why, it is the most dastardly outrage——"

"I mean, what do you think of the proposition?"

"Eh?"

"It is evident that Madge means what she says—for there is no doubt that Madge wrote this letter."

"I don't doubt that she means it."

"Then what do you think of the proposition?"

"I don't know what you mean, Nick."

"It is plain enough."

"The demand for the money?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to ask what I think about complying with the demand?"

"Yes."

"Do you also mean that you are thinking seriously of complying with it?"

"Yes."

"It had not occurred to me that you would do that," said Hamilton, in surprise. "If I were alone in this case, I should not hesitate a moment. I would send the hundred thousand without a question; but—frankly it never occurred to me that you would consent to it."

"You are a rich man, Hamilton, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Very rich; eh?"

"I suppose so."

"You would give a great deal more than that amount to be assured of the safety of Doris, would you not?"

"I certainly would."

"Do you realize the craftiness of this plan, Larry?"

"No. It seems simple enough. What is it?"

"Madge finds a little girl somewhere down on the East Side; she induces her parents to lend the girl to her for awhile. She leaves the note that is to be delivered to me at the home of the little girl, with instructions that she is to take the note to the address at a certain time. She also gives further instruction concerning the delivery of the package which she is to receive at my house.

"She then sets a watch upon my house. The girl is seen to take the note there. She is seen when she leaves the house with the package. Her instructions doubtless are merely to walk in a certain direction, or toward a certain place in the city, until she is accosted by a person who will say certain words to her. When she hears those words she is to deliver the package to the person who utters them.

"Madge has the idea that by pursuing these tactics, the child cannot be shadowed after she leaves my house; that is, it will be impossible to do so without her knowing it."

The detective paused.

"Well?" asked Hamilton.

"That is all," replied Nick.

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I am going to have one hundred one-thousand-dollar

bills ready to deliver to the child when she makes her appearance."

"*You are!*"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I am going to take my chances of getting the money back again."

"At least, Nick, you will permit me to supply the money?"

"No. It is my own risk."

"Then, by thunder, you have got to let me supply half of it, old man."

"All right. I will let you do that."

"And you will try to shadow the girl?"

"I think that some effort will be made in that direction."

"What am I to be doing in the meantime, Nick?"

"I have laid out your work for you, Larry."

"Well?"

"It is not likely that Ashburton or Gordon will suspect that you regard either of them as associated with this case. They entered your club in the guise of gentlemen, and I take it that they left clean records behind them there, didn't they?"

"Yes."

"Then it is more than likely that neither of them will be afraid to be seen about town now."

"But they haven't been seen in more than two weeks."

"That is probably because they have been out of town. I am reasonably sure that they are back here again now."

"And that they will show themselves?"

"Yes."

"What am I to do?"

"You are, in your present disguise, to make the rounds of the hotels and cafés where you think there is a possibility of encountering either of them. Ten-Ichi will assume some sort of disguise and shadow you."

"Shadow me!"

"Yes."

"I don't understand."

"If you should happen to see either of the men you are searching for, you will make an agreed-upon signal to Ten-Ichi, who will then take up the case, and you will continue your search for the other man."

"I see."

"It will not be a difficult task. You will keep it up if necessary until late at night; until you are satisfied that it is useless to search further to-day, after which you will return here. Ten-Ichi, you understand your duties?"

"Yes."

"Well, we have only two hours until three o'clock. I think we had better make ready to receive Madge Morley's messenger."

"How are you going to shadow the girl, Nick?"

"I haven't decided yet. I may not be able to do so—but I think I will."

"I wish I could see it."

"You cannot. You have other work to do."

At three o'clock that afternoon, Nick Carter was supposedly seated in his study. In reality it was Chick who was made up to represent his chief.

Two or three minutes after the hour Joseph entered the room and announced that there was a child at the basement door asking for him, and Chick directed that she be brought to the study; and when she entered the room she gave him a note which contained the exact words that had been mentioned in the letter, the contents of which we already know.

Chick read the letter; then he said:

"Were you told to get a package from me?"

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"And you are to take it to a certain place, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; but I was told not to tell you where that was, and I promised."

"Very well. I will not ask you to break your promise. But I wish you would tell the lady that I expect her to keep her promise, too. Will you do that?"

"Yes, sir."

"How old are you, my child?"

"Twelve."

"And how are you going to carry this package?"

"In my hands."

"Haven't you a pocket in your dress?"

"Yes, sir. Two of them. One on each side. One is for pencils and the other is for candy—when I have any."

"I haven't any candy, but I have some peanuts. Do you like peanuts?"

"Oh, yes, sir; very much."

"I am glad of that. See what a lot of them I have got here."

"My goodness!" exclaimed the child, when she saw. "A lot of them, aren't there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are those pockets of yours? I want to fill them."

She showed him and he filled each pocket full—and then he gave her the paper bag, containing what was left.

"You can eat out of the bag," he said, "until they are gone, and then you will still have a lot in your pockets. You can eat them all the way home—only you must be careful not to drop this package;" and he gave her the money.

"No, sir," she said; "I won't drop it."

He let her out at the front door and then returned quietly to Nick's study; nor did any other person leave Nick Carter's house for more than an hour after that.

But, nevertheless, Chick had noticed in which direction the child started away, and the moment she left the doorsteps, he hastened to the roof of the house, and from

there he wigwagged certain signals to other roofs in sight from where he stood.

And in the meantime the child was walking rapidly away from the house, consuming peanuts as she went.

CHAPTER VII.

NICK CARTER'S MASTER STROKE.

Nick Carter's plans in regard to the shadowing of the child until she should meet and deliver the package that had been entrusted to her, were somewhat elaborate; but he believed that it was only by the exercise of the utmost skill that he could hope to be successful.

He knew with whom he had to deal.

He believed that Madge Morley was the smartest of her kind, and he realized that she would be quick to detect any effort on his part—that is, any ordinary effort—to follow the messenger.

Long afterward, when referring to this particular case, the detective laughingly remarked that he requisitioned more hacks, hansoms, and coupés that day than he would ordinarily use in a year.

There was a hack near the corner below Nick's house; there was a coupé near the corner in the opposite direction; there were hansoms and hacks and other vehicles scattered along the side streets in either direction from the avenue; there were men on the roofs of houses from which they could watch the roof of Nick's house, and there were other men on other roofs, still farther away, who could see their compatriots who were similarly located.

Nick himself was seated in a hansom—in disguise, of course. It was stationed four blocks away from his own house and faced in the opposite direction; but directly ahead of him on the top of a building that was in plain view from where he sat waiting, there was a man who was prepared to signal to him at the right moment.

When Chick ran to the top of the house and made a signal, it told which direction the child had taken on leaving the house; and it told it to a man who was on a roof at the opposite side of the street.

He passed the signal along to another man farther down, who in turn signaled to the driver of the hack at the corner which the child was soon to pass.

That driver whipped up his horses and started away before the child got to him, turned the corner through the side street, driving slowly.

The moment he appeared around the corner, another vehicle started away from a door at which it had been standing and drove into the avenue just as the child was crossing the street.

It turned the corner slowly, kept pace with the child—who was diligently consuming peanuts, by the way—almost to the next corner, when the driver started ahead and turned into that street.

Out of that street, after the child had passed it and had arrived almost to the next one, came a conveyance of still a different description; but it traveled rapidly and soon passed her, turning off from the avenue again presently and disappearing.

In the meantime signals were flying across the roofs along the avenue and streets; other hacks, coupés, and hansoms were obeying them, and the most expert watcher could not have guessed that the child was being followed.

The carriage in which Nick was seated started slowly ahead at the very instant when the child issued from his own house. He was four blocks in advance of her and he did not look behind him once.

Nevertheless he somehow took exactly the same route that she followed—anticipating it by four blocks, always!

The men on the roofs and the men on the boxes of the conveyances were doing the following; men ahead of Nick on the roofs were receiving the signals from them and transmitting the messages to the detective.

When the child turned, Nick was made instantly aware of it, and he turned also in the same direction, drove rapidly until he encountered another hack or coupé or hansom, into which he changed and, following the directions he received from the roofs, hastened around corners until he was again on the same street with the childish messenger and about the same distance ahead of her.

When the roofs that were peopled by Nick's men were passed, they descended to the street one after another, and leaped into one of the conveyances that had been hired for their purposes. Then they were driven along streets until they found positions far in advance of the child—positions where they could receive further signals and from which they could transmit them to Nick Carter.

And so the game was kept up.

The instant when the duty of one man was finished at a certain place, he left it and in all haste sought another point of vantage on the line of march; and so, with apparent ease, the detective kept well ahead of the child, and knew every moment exactly where she was.

She walked a long distance, too; and she took her directions seemingly without reason, although Nick knew that she had been directed to do so in order that the persons who had given her the instructions could satisfy themselves perfectly that she was not followed before they attempted to secure the package she carried.

From Nick Carter's house she walked to Twenty-sixth Street; there she went through to Third Avenue; thence up Third Avenue to Twenty-seventh Street; thence back again to Fourth Avenue; thence down Fourth Avenue to Twenty-fourth Street; thence through to Madison Square; thence across the square along the winding paths directly to the Fifth Avenue Hotel; and thence down Broadway to Fourteenth Street; thence into University Place and to Eleventh Street; thence through

Eleventh Street to the side entrance to the St. Denis Hotel.

Here a woman who was standing at the entrance stepped forward quickly and confronted her.

She said something hastily. She was seen to seize the package that the child carried.

Then she said something else, and at the same instant seized the almost emptied bag of peanuts and threw it into the middle of the street—and then, without another word, she turned and disappeared into the hotel.

Nick was, at that moment, away ahead of the trail, and almost to Fourth Avenue; but instantly his hack turned around and dashed toward the hotel at a pace that was almost a run.

He sprang out at the corner; a man came and spoke a few words rapidly to him; a hack drew up at the side entrance; two others stopped before the Broadway entrance; Nick himself entered the hotel.

He passed through the office and turned up the short flight of steps to the ladies' reception-room—and in the doorway, as he entered it, he came face to face with the woman who had taken the package from the child, for the man who had addressed him on the street had given him her description.

He knew that she was not Madge Morley the instant he saw her, and instantly his mind jumped to the conclusion that here was another go-between who had been paid for her services, and who probably knew no more about the facts of the case than the clerk at the desk.

She had been paid to receive the package, and to transfer it to another person.

Nick made no attempt to stop her.

He let her pass him, but he signaled to another man who had followed him into the hotel, and when the woman later passed from the building again at the side entrance, she was followed.

Nick hastened to the ladies' entrance on Broadway.

A man and a woman had just passed out of that door—separately. There was no indication that they were together or were known to each other.

The detective signaled again to another helper, and indicated the man. He was also followed away from the hotel.

Nick himself pursued the woman.

She walked rapidly down Broadway and crossed to Wanamaker's store. She passed inside with the detective close behind her.

It was almost time to close the store; people were leaving by every entrance.

The woman passed directly through the store toward the Fourth Avenue side, and without pausing in her rapid walk went out upon the street again.

A carriage—it looked like a private equipage, too—was standing there, waiting.

The woman went to it and jumped inside without even so much as a word to the driver; but he seemed not to need it, for the instant he heard the door close he started the horses forward.

There was snow in piles all through the street. Men were shoveling it into carts as rapidly as possible, but nevertheless the way was impeded.

The carriage started toward Tenth Street and stopped at the corner, waiting for an express-wagon to get out of the way so it could pass.

It stopped exactly at the crossing, which was just what the detective wanted.

He stepped quickly forward until he stood beside it. He turned the handle of the door quickly, opened it silently, stepped inside, closed the door as silently behind him, and seated himself softly on the cushion beside the woman.

Her attention had been attracted through the opposite window. She was impatient at the delay. Her head was half-way out through the window when Nick so deftly entered her carriage and seated himself beside her; and this accounted for her not being aware of his presence until the carriage resumed its way again and she sank back upon the seat of the carriage with a sigh of relief.

But as she did so, her wrists were seized in a relentless grasp, two sharp clicks followed the act, and she was suddenly helpless with her wrists handcuffed together in front of her.

Her lips parted to utter a scream, but Nick quickly placed one hand over her mouth while he held her utterly helpless with the other.

"How are you, Madge?" he asked, with deliberate irony. "A little bit startled; eh? I don't wonder at it. Nice pair of bracelets those I just gave you. Like 'em?"

She struggled, but it was useless.

"I suppose your driver has instructions where to take you?" he said, smiling at her vain efforts to free herself. "I wonder if you have sense enough to keep still if I take my hand from your mouth; eh?"

She nodded; but he held it there a moment longer, while he said:

"You know, Madge, if you should scream it would do no good. A policeman would come to the door of the carriage and I would quickly satisfy him that I am Nick Carter. The result would be that we would go to police headquarters instead of to the place where you wish to go. And, once more—well, I need not enlarge upon that. Will you be silent and listen to reason if I take my hand from you lips?"

She nodded again, and he removed his hand; but at the same instant he drew a steel plug from his pocket and jammed it down behind the catch of the door on her side of the carriage.

"It will be somewhat difficult for you to open that door very quickly, if you should make the effort," he said

dryly. "Even with your hands fastened, you might make the attempt, you know."

It was evident that she had recovered from her first fright, for now she turned her face toward him—and it was an exquisitely beautiful face; the last one in the world to belong to such a character as she possessed—and smiled, showing her white teeth, her dimples, and sparkling upon him with her Mediterranean blue eyes.

"You are a cool one, Nick Carter," she said.

"Sure," replied Nick.

"How in the world did you succeed in tracking that girl so quickly? You must be a wizard, or else my people are fools."

"Quite the contrary, I assure you. Your people have not the least idea that she was shadowed, even at this moment. And that reminds me: Where is the package of money, Madge? Ah, yes! Here it is, on the seat beside you, and I never saw it till this moment."

"Package of money, indeed!" she replied. "I don't believe there is a cent in it."

"Don't you? Look."

He tore the package open and revealed to her astonished gaze a pile of clean, new one-thousand-dollar bills.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DANGEROUS WOMAN.

Crises occur in the lives of all people, and one of these had loomed suddenly and prominently in the experience of Madge Morley.

It would be difficult to explain the sensations she felt when that wealth of cash was so unexpectedly displayed before her eyes; and the thought that only a moment ago it had been in her possession—had been her own for an instant—was overwhelming.

She flushed, grew pale, and flushed again. Her eyes dilated, contracted, and dilated again. The winning smile which she had somehow conjured up became a grimace. Her lips became dry and she moistened them with the tip of her tongue.

At last the power of speech returned to her.

"You're a fool!" she said.

"Why?" asked Nick.

"To show that money to me—now."

"Again, why?"

"Because you are. I did not think you would send it."

"Then why did you take so much trouble to receive it? Why did you run the risk if you did not suppose I would meet your proposal?"

"Because—there was a chance that you were what I now know you to be—a fool!"

"Oh, I see."

"No, you do not see; but you will—later."

"Possibly."

"Did you suspect that it was I who wrote the letter?" she asked.

"No," he replied quietly. "I knew it."

"How did you know it?"

"I guessed it the moment—that is, I guessed that you were the abductor of Doris, the moment I knew that she had disappeared."

"When did you find that out?"

"I received the first intimation concerning it last night at half-past ten. I knew it for a certainty soon after midnight."

"Your first intimation, as you call it, came over the telephone, didn't it?"

"Yes—and I have found the telephone."

She laughed aloud.

"I thought you would do so," she said. "I wish you would put that money away."

"Why?"

"I don't like the looks of it."

"No? I suppose your own supply is running short, isn't it?"

"If it were not I should not have undertaken this affair—just yet."

"What an unpleasant habit you have of interpolating dashes in your conversation."

"I mean them to be significant."

"Quite so. Of what?"

She did not reply, but she turned her brilliant eyes upon him again and gazed long and steadily into his.

"Well?" he asked.

"What are you going to do with that money, Nick Carter?"

"I shall keep it; it is mine."

"I did not know that you were so rich."

Nick laughed.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "I could produce this much many times over."

"You could? Honestly?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't you give that money to me?"

"Why should I?"

"For the sake of Doris."

"I can rescue Doris without the aid of money—now."

"I don't think so; but you can try. Is there a hundred thousand dollars there?"

"Yes."

"Is it good money?"

"Perfectly good."

"Let me hold it in my hands. They are fastened together. I will return it when you ask for it."

Nick placed the money in her hands and she clasped it tightly.

"It feels good," she said. "May I count it?"

"Yes."

Slowly she fingered the bills until she had counted a hundred; then she sighed.

"If you will give this money to me," she said, "I will restore Doris to you within an hour; I will betray my confederates into your hands, and prove to you at the same time that they are the most daring and dangerous bank-burglars now at large—and I will agree to depart from this country at once and forever."

"You would sell your soul for that money, wouldn't you, Madge?"

"Yes; if I had one to dispose of. I was made without a soul."

"Churchmen would say that you have one, to save."

"Nick Carter, are you in love with any woman?"

She asked the question so suddenly and in such a startling manner that Nick was amazed.

"No," he answered her quietly.

"You are not in love with Doris, then?"

"Doris is like a daughter to me."

"Bah! Do you suppose I will swallow that?"

"As you please, Madge."

"Is it true?"

"Yes."

"And you are not in love with any woman at the present time?"

"No."

"I have never in my life been in love with any man, Nick Carter——"

"Indeed?"

"——until now."

Nick laughed aloud.

"You are trying a very old and very threadbare game now, Madge," he said.

"I expected you would receive it like that."

"I suppose you are about to add that you have fallen hopelessly in love with me, since I showed you that money: eh?"

"I could love you—hopelessly, as you express it."

"Think what a calamity that would be." He laughed again, for he did not at all take her seriously.

She frowned and bit her lips.

"You think that I am very bad, don't you?" she asked.

"I haven't any doubt at all on the subject, Madge."

"I am bad—in one way," she murmured, as if speaking more to herself than to him.

"In all ways, Madge."

"No; not in all ways. There is one matter in which I have not erred. I can look other women—even Doris—in the face without a blush."

Nick was silent.

"Don't you believe me?" she demanded.

"I am trying to convince myself that I can believe you," he replied.

"It is true."

"I think we had better change the subject, Madge."

"No; I have not done yet. I am, strangely enough, in the mood to tell you something about myself."

"Well?"

"I am the daughter of an adventuress—never mind who. You would know about her if I mentioned her name. Nor does it matter who my father was, save that he was a cousin of Doris' father."

"Ah! So you have the Granley blood in your veins, after all. That accounts for the slight—very slight—resemblance between you and Doris."

"Yes. I was brought up in a hotbed of intrigue. My mother was a Russian diplomatic spy; my father was—nothing. He was guillotined in Paris under an assumed name. As a child I was familiar with every court in Europe. I, too, became a spy when I was old enough. Then I accepted a bribe and lost my prestige. I became a thief. I picked pockets. I stole whatever I could find to steal. Then I became a burglar, and finally the brains of a band of burglars."

"A position which you still enjoy, I presume," said Nick dryly.

"Yes. There is no one so expert as I am in the use of burglars' tools. It was I who entered your own house one night——"

"And struck Doris on the head with a bludgeon," interrupted Nick.

"Yes. You should thank me for that. It brought back her memory."

"So it did. It was not your fault, however, that it did not kill her."

"No; I intended to kill her—and you, too, that night."

"I do not doubt it."

"I have been all the things I have said, Nick Carter—but I have never been bad in any other way."

"I will believe you if the belief will do you any good," said Nick.

"I have never seen a man with whom I could fall in love," she continued.

"No? That is perhaps fortunate, Madge."

"Until I saw you, I mean."

"Don't try my credulity too far, young woman."

"I am in earnest, although I know that you have no faith in what I say. Do you know how old I am?"

"Once upon a time you were reported to be eighteen."

"I am twenty-three."

"I think I will have to ask you to let me change the subject for a moment, Madge," said the detective. "We have been traveling quite steadily since I entered this carriage, and now I observe that we have entered Central Park at the plaza entrance. It becomes necessary for me to ask you where we are going?"

"The driver has his instructions. He is carrying them out," she replied evasively.

"He is taking you home, of course?"

"Yes."

"Is Doris there?"

"You will know the answer to that—when you get there."

"Has any harm come to her, Madge?"

"No; not yet."

"Why did you steal her away from her home?"

"To get money. What else?"

"But how? Did you think that I was so easy that I would send you a hundred thousand dollars without knowing that I would get it back?"

She laughed aloud at that, some of her old spirit returning.

"I thought you were easy," she said. "I think so still—but not exactly in that way."

"In what way, then?"

"You will know—before we part."

"You persist in that habit of using double in your speech."

"Yes. Let me tell you something, Nick Carter. You think that you have me safely in your power, but the truth is that you are walking directly into mine."

CHAPTER IX.

MADGE TRIES A WORN-OUT GAME.

"I suppose," said Nick, after a short pause, "that you are laboring under the belief that your confederates will be at your home when we arrive there."

She shrugged her shoulders and did not reply.

"I refer to 'Lord' Ashburton, and Mr. Gordon," he continued.

Madge turned her glance upon him again, and this time there was unquestionable admiration in her eyes.

"You know who they are?" she asked, raising her eyebrows.

"Certainly."

"What a fellow you are! How did you know it?"

"A little green bird flew down out of the clouds and told me."

She laughed amazedly.

"Have they been arrested?" she asked.

"Possibly—by this time. One of them, at least, is followed."

"Which one?"

"He who came out of the hotel at the same time you did."

"That was—Ashburton."

"Alias—what?" asked Nick.

"Oh, he has so many aliases that I haven't time to remember them all. You will have heard of him, possibly, as Gentleman Jim, the English crook."

"So," said Nick. "He did the 'Lord' Ashburton act, did he?"

"Yes. He said that Hamilton was too easy. Do you know Nick"—with easy familiarity—"I used to think, when I was masquerading as Doris Granley, that I would marry Hamilton."

"He will be charmed when I tell him about it," drawled the detective.

"I think I could charm him, if I had him where I could get at him," she said, not in the least offended by Nick's manner. "I could charm any man—but you. A virtuous woman can always charm almost any man."

"I had supposed that it was the other way around, Madge."

"Give me half a chance at Hamilton, and I'll show you."

"I am afraid that you won't get it," said Nick. "Is Doris at the house where we are going?"

"You will find that out when you get there."

"Aren't we almost there? There is 110th Street, right ahead of us."

"Yes."

"You are not headed for the house of the telephone, are you?"

"Pretty nearly; not quite. Have I got to step out of the carriage with these irons on my wrists?"

"You won't mind that, Madge. It is almost dark. Nobody will see you."

"Put that money away out of my sight, Nick Carter," she said suddenly.

He did so; and at that moment the carriage turned into 111th Street.

She had a purse on her lap, and Nick now picked it up quietly and opened it.

"What are you doing?" she demanded. "Robbing me?"

"No; I am looking for the latch-key. Is this it?"

"Yes."

"Now, as I suppose we have almost arrived, you had better tell me what I am to do with the chap who is driving this outfit. Shall I rap him on the head and truss him up, or shall I give him an order of some sort and send him about his business?"

"You had best take the latter course. He is only a hired man from a livery-stable. I promised him ten dollars for this afternoon's work. There is some money in my purse. You can pay him from that."

Nick laughed, and took ten dollars from his own pocket.

"Really, Madge," he said, "I have enjoyed this ride with you so much that I could not even think of permitting you to pay for it." Then he laughed again, and added: "The driver did not see me enter the carriage; he will be rather surprised to see me get out of it."

"He will, if he happens to see these handcuffs, Nick. At least, let me conceal them in my muff."

"Have you a muff with you?"

"Yes. It is behind me, on the other side."

Nick unlocked one of the handcuffs, and, holding the hand that was still shackled, told her to thrust the other one through the muff; when she did so, he snapped the iron back upon it again.

"There," he said. "Does that suit you better?"

"Very much better. You seem to be dreadfully afraid to leave my hands free."

"I don't yet know who else I may have to encounter, Madge. I would rather have you keep out of the fight if there should happen to be one."

The carriage pulled up against the curb and came to a stop, and Nick had barely removed the steel plug from the latch of the door when the coachman pulled it open.

The man started back with an exclamation of astonishment.

"D-didn't know that I h-had two p-passengers," he said, stuttering.

Nick said nothing, but sprang outside and assisted Madge to alight.

"Wh-where did I p-pick you up?" asked the driver.

"I got in while you were asleep," said Nick. "Here is the ten dollars that the lady said she would give you."

"Th-that was for one p-passenger," he stuttered.

"All right," said Nick. "If you will go and change horses, and return here in half an hour, I will give you ten more to take me home."

"By g-gracious, I'll do it!"

Nick had stood with one arm locked through Madge's during the colloquy, for he did not intend that she should give him the slip or secure an opportunity to pass any signals to a third person, either. Now they turned about and faced the house.

"Hello!" said Nick, and stopped. Then he laughed.

"I say, Madge, that was cute of you, wasn't it. You were right next door to the vacant house with the telephone all the while, weren't you?"

"Yes. Are you going in, Nick Carter? Don't forget that you have the key. It is cold out here."

"How many people are in that house at the present moment that you know about, Madge?"

"Two."

"Who are they?"

"A maid who is devoted to me and a Swedish servant who cannot speak English, and who knows absolutely nothing about us."

"And Doris?"

"I told you that you would find that out when you got there, didn't I?"

"Yes. You say that the maid is devoted to you. Does she know what you are?"

"She has been with me ten years. She ought to."

They ascended the steps together, Nick retaining hold of his companion's arm. He inserted the key in the lock and pushed the door open; then he took a step backward, and murmured:

"After you, Miss Morley."

Madge laughed merrily.

"You're a peach, Nick! You certainly are!" she said, still laughing. "I ought to be in the depths of woe at this minute, I suppose; but I'm not." Then, suddenly she raised her voice and called aloud:

"Mar-*ree!*"

"Yes, madam," came a reply from the top of the stairs; and at once there came into view, descending them, a tall, angular woman with a hard, bony face, who kept her eyes suspiciously upon the detective as she approached him.

As for Nick, he stood apparently leaning against the wall very quietly; but all the same he was prepared for the woman's approach, for he had guessed that the name shouted by Madge when she entered the house had some other significance than appeared on the surface—and he had purposely placed himself so that Madge was between him and the approaching woman.

She reached the bottom step, still with her eyes intently fixed upon the detective—and then he moved; and so quickly that neither of the women were prepared for it.

He stepped from behind Madge, who had been so busily engaged in making signals with her lips that she had neglected to watch him, and before the elder woman could make a move he seized her by the shoulders and whirled her around, snapping handcuffs upon her wrists as he did so.

Instantly he discovered that he had shackled a human tigress, and but for his great strength she might have done him harm even then.

She struggled, and swore, and stamped her feet, and raved; but he held her fast by the shoulders so that she could not move, and after a moment, when she had quieted down a little, he succeeded in producing still another pair of handcuffs from his pockets, and, after passing one of them inside the chain of the pair she already wore, he snapped them around one of the spindles of the balustrade. Then he stepped back away from her.

Madge, with her hands still inside her muff, was laughing, and again Nick saw admiration in her eyes.

"You are a wonder, Nick!" she said. "You are the first person, man or woman, who ever got the best of Susan."

"So. Susan is her name, is it? Where is Marie?"

"Marie is the name I call her when I wish to put her on her guard."

"I guessed as much. Well, it didn't work that time, did it?"

"Nothing seems to work—against you."

All this time the other woman was silent, but her eyes were snapping viciously.

"Is this your work, Madge Morley?" she demanded coldly.

For reply, Madge pushed her muff back upon her forearm and exhibited the irons on her own wrists.

"You see?" she said.

"Who is he?" asked Susan, precisely as if Nick were not present at all.

"He is the Nick Carter I told you about," replied Madge.

"Oh!"

There was a world of meaning in that simple interjection, and for just one instant her venomous eyes rested upon the detective. He was startled by its balefulness; but he laughed shortly and moved a chair forward where the woman could sit upon it.

"You will be more comfortable seated," he said. "Madge, I will thank you to stand where you are for a moment."

He crossed to the door then, and, having turned the big key in the outside door, he also put up the chain across the inside doors.

"Why do you do that?" she asked, watching him.

"I don't wish to be surprised, that's all. And now, Madge, if you will give me the pleasure of your company, we will make a tour of the house, beginning with the basement, where I will also fasten the doors and windows more securely. Come."

"Really, Nick," she said, "you are very amusing."

"I'm glad of it. Same to you, Madge. Come."

"Wait a minute, Nick. Do me a favor."

"What is it?"

"Show Susan that money, will you? She has never seen so much at one time in her life. Please do it."

To humor her Nick pulled the roll of thousand-dollar bills from his pocket, and held it before the elder woman's eyes.

And then a most astounding thing occurred.

CHAPTER X.

NICK CARTER FACES A CRISIS.

The woman, who had been as silent as a sphinx until that moment, seemed to be transformed into a fury the moment that her eyes rested upon the wealth which Nick Carter held in his hand.

She uttered a shriek which, but for the fact that all the doors and windows of the house were tightly closed, might have been heard far away along the street. She foamed at the mouth; her mad eyes seemed to pop almost out of her head, and she leaped forward with an exhibition of such sudden and mighty strength that not only was the spindle of the balustrade to which she was fastened torn away, but the short chain which connected the handcuffs on her wrists snapped in the middle—and she was free.

It all happened in an instant—while Nick stood in front of her with his hand containing the money stretched out toward her and with a smile on his face; and the next instant her hands were tearing at his throat, and, despite his great strength, he was borne backward to the floor.

She was a veritable human cyclone in the fury of her attack upon him; an attack which he had no reason to expect, and for which he was in no wise prepared.

As he was borne downward another strange thing happened, for Madge drew her hands from her muff.

One of them was free, for, somehow, she had managed to slip her hand through the iron bracelet; the other wrist—the right one—still held the handcuff, and, from it connected by the short chain, dangled the other one from which she had freed herself.

Without a word, with just one step forward, she raised her right hand over her head, and with terrific force she brought the freed handcuff down upon Nick Carter's head.

It was all over in an instant; and Nick Carter was stretched upon the floor of that hallway like one who is dead, and the old woman was still tearing at his throat with her clawlike hands.

But Madge uttered a word of sharp command, at which a shiver ran through the elder woman, and with seeming reluctance she desisted and then rose slowly to her feet.

The old woman was about to speak, but she happened to look upon her mistress, and the words she would have said remained unuttered.

Madge Darley was looking down upon her victim with a strange expression on her face; an expression which the old woman seemed to understand, for she remained perfectly silent, and drew back a little with a mocking sneer on her face—and waited.

"Bring some ropes, Susan," Madge ordered presently; and Susan hastened to obey, soon returning with a sufficient quantity to have trussed up two or three men.

They arranged his arms along his sides, and then Madge made a slip-knot, which she placed around his shoulders and drew it down tightly.

Then with Susan's aid the rope was wound round and round the detective's body with many coils until it was looped again around his ankles and tied.

"Now take him by the shoulders," ordered Madge. "We will carry him to my room."

Susan hesitated.

"Did you hear me?" said Madge sharply; and without replying Susan lifted him as if he were a child, and with Madge at his feet they carried him to the second floor of the house and into a large and elegantly appointed room, where they deposited him on the bed.

That done, Madge bent over him and examined his head where the blow had fallen; but after a moment she straightened up again, and that same bewitching smile, which was as natural to her as breathing, shone in her eyes and on her features.

"He is only stunned," she said. "The blow didn't even draw blood. He will probably have a bump there, where I hit him, but it won't amount to anything."

Had she looked toward Nick at that instant, she would have seen his eyelids flutter and then draw apart; she would have seen that one quick glance of his took in his entire surroundings, and she would have seen them close again.

But she did not look toward him, because she was rather startled by a remark that Susan made at that instant; and Susan did not look, because her eyes were fixed with a mocking sneer on the face of her mistress.

"You're a fool! A *fool!*" was what Susan said to her.

Madge shrugged her shoulders, and replied:

"And you are altogether too smart, Susan. You are much too observing."

"I have waited for it and watched for it a good many

years," continued Susan, "and I have hoped against hope that it would never come, although I might have known that, after all, you are only a woman and could not escape."

Madge laughed uneasily, and shrugged her shoulders again.

To a third person—to ourselves, even—it would seem that the woman spoke in enigmas, but it was evident that her mistress understood her perfectly well, for she tossed her head with something of haughtiness in the gesture as she replied:

"Well? What of it?"

"It will be your undoing. It will be your ruin, Madge," said the old woman sadly.

"Bah! Stop your croaking."

For a moment it seemed that Susan was rendered almost speechless, but whether from anger or from sorrow could not be determined. Then she said:

"Why should you select to fall in love with that man? Your worst enemy. Why?"

"Do you suppose that I *wanted* to do it?" demanded Madge, with anger in her eyes and in her voice also. "Can you thrust your bare hand into a pot of tar without being defiled? Or, as in this case, can you bathe in sunshine without feeling its glow?"

Susan did not answer, and there was silence between them for a long time; at last Susan asked a question.

"What shall you do with him?" she demanded.

"If he listens to reason, I will—I will do everything in the world for him," replied Madge.

"And if he should refuse to listen to reason, as you call it—what then?"

Madge shuddered.

"I don't know—yet," she replied weakly.

"You ought to know, for I tell you now that you have thrown your bread upon the waters, and that it will never return to you. You have built a house of sand which will crumble before your eyes. You have saved your heart untouched all these years in order to bestow it where it is not wanted; where it will be scorned; where, in return for your love, you will receive only contempt. I know it."

For a moment Madge seemed to straighten where she stood until her form grew taller. Then she strode across the floor to the door of the room and opened it; after which she stepped back and said coldly:

"Go. Leave me. Do not return until I call you."

The old woman bowed her head humbly, and in silence left the room, closing the door after her—which Madge immediately locked.

After she had done that, she stood for a moment with her hand still resting upon the key she had turned; then she crossed the room to the bedside, and stood there with her hands clasped together in front of her, with her head bowed and with her eyes fixed upon Nick Carter's face.

Nick knew that she was there; he knew that she was watching him, and he found it rather difficult to keep up the appearance of unconsciousness under such trying circumstances.

But he succeeded, and, although many minutes passed before she moved at all, there was nothing about him during that time save his steady breathing to denote that he was alive.

At last she sighed deeply, and turned away.

Nick partly opened his eyes then, and followed her movements.

She went to a mirror, and she stood there before it a long time, studying her own reflection in the glass; and then abruptly she wheeled about and returned to the bedside.

Again she looked down upon him in utter silence for a time; then she rested one hand lightly upon his forehead, and he heard her whisper to herself:

"Strange that he is so long a time unconscious."

Then she bent over him, and he felt her lips brush lightly against his forehead.

It was difficult then to remain silent and motionless—but he did it.

Next he felt her fingers at his waistcoat pocket, and in a moment she had found the key to the handcuffs and removed the one which still clung to her right wrist; then she returned the key.

She went across the room again, and Nick heard her drop into a chair where he could not see her—and, indeed, he dared not look lest her own eyes should be fixed upon his face.

"I suppose," he thought, "that I will have to come around presently, or she will tumble. I wonder, in fact, if she hasn't tumbled already, and if all this business is not a superb bit of play-acting? Surely it cannot be anything else."

He was on the point of uttering a sigh to tell her that

consciousness had returned to him when she started to her feet and rapidly came to his side again.

And this time she did not hesitate in what she wished to do, for she fell upon her knees beside the bed, she raised his head and thrust her arms around his neck, and then in a perfect abandonment of passionate force she covered his face, his eyes, his forehead, and his lips with kisses.

This was more than human nature could withstand—Nick Carter's human nature, at least.

He struggled—all that he could struggle, bound as he was—and then he exclaimed:

"What in the world——!"

She started to her feet with a low cry, and Nick, looking up at her in pretended amazement, saw that her face was burning with blushes, and that she seemed to be as frightened as a child who is caught stealing cookies from mama's jar.

"Hello, Madge," he said. "What happened?"

She recovered herself instantly, but she moved a trifle farther away from him—where the light would not shine upon her quite so glaringly.

"Your position ought to determine that question for you," she replied.

"Well, I suppose you have got the money now all right; eh?"

She started.

"I had utterly forgotten it," she said. "I have not thought of it since——"

She turned and hurried from the room, down the stairs, leaving him alone in the brilliantly lighted room.

"Hi-ugh!" thought the detective. "I begin to think she is in dead earnest. Nothing short of that could have made her forget the existence of that cash."

Then a noise startled him, proceeding from the lower part of the house.

He listened, and he heard voices raised in anger—Madge's voice and Susan's.

Then there followed a scream—Madge's voice.

After that he could hear the sound of struggling; then something very like a heavy blow, then a crashing fall, and all was still again.

"They have been fighting for the possession of that money," he told himself. "I know only too well what a fight between those two would mean. Susan could crush Madge like an eggshell, with that crazy strength of hers—and, if I am to judge from the sound, I rather think she has done it. I wonder if I can get myself loose from this rope?"

He ceased to speculate and began to work, straining at the bonds that held him with all the might he possessed.

But he had been bound in such a way that he could not make use of his great strength, and, after several vain attempts to break loose, he sighed resignedly and desisted.

"It is no use," he muttered aloud; and then he started violently.

A hollow, guttural laugh close beside him made him turn his head quickly; and then he saw at once the danger to which he was exposed.

Susan was standing over him with one hand raised; and that hand held a gleaming knife in its grasp.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNEXPECTED TRAGEDY.

The expression of fury in the woman's eyes; the snarling expression of her tightly drawn lips, which revealed her yellow tusks of teeth; the knotted muscles of her face and the rigid attitude of her whole body were not calculated to reassure the detective as he looked upon her, waiting for the blow to fall—the blow which he knew would end his life if it did fall.

But she did not seem disposed to hasten.

Instead, after a moment during which she sustained the tableaulike attitude, her muscles relaxed, and she allowed her arm to fall at her side; but otherwise her aspect did not change.

"I am going to kill you, Nick Carter," she said venomously.

Nick did not reply, and after a moment she thrust her other hand before his eyes, showing him that it held the package of thousand-dollar bills.

"Look!" she demanded.

"I see it," replied Nick.

"It is the money."

"Yes."

"I have counted it—over and over again. I have counted it, I tell you. That package contains a hundred thousand dollars."

"Well?" said Nick. "What of it?"

"It is mine! *Mine! Mine!*"

"It appears to be yours—just now. How did you get it? Did you have to kill your best friend for it? Have

you murdered Madge in order to possess yourself of that money?"

She snarled into his face, her fury manifesting itself again.

"She deserved death," growled Susan. "Bah! I have not killed her yet. But I will! I will kill her and you, too, before I leave this house. Do you know what she has done? Do you know what she has been fool enough to do? But you do not know, for you were unconscious."

She stopped in her tirade and was silent a moment, and Nick did not offer to interrupt.

"I have known her from a child," the woman continued. "She was always beautiful. She was always different from other girls. She has always treated all men alike—with cold contempt. She has never seen one who has called up a shade of interest in her regard until you—*you* came into her life. Why didn't you keep out of it, you hound?"

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"Answer me!" demanded the woman, raising the knife.

"How can I answer you?" replied Nick. "I think you should explain first what you are talking about."

"I am talking about Madge's infatuation for you, you spy!"

Nick laughed aloud in her face, although he knew it was dangerous to do so; and, indeed, it came near to being his death-warrant, for she raised the knife again and seemed about to strike with it.

But he did not flinch. He held his eyes firmly upon hers, and did not permit the flicker of an eyelash to suggest to her that he thought she really intended to kill him.

For some unknown reason, then, her hard face softened. Whether it was because of his bravery, or not, cannot be said, but some of the fury died out of her face and a sparkle of grim admiration took its place.

"You don't seem to have any sense of fear," she grumbled.

"No," replied Nick; "what would be the use?"

She did not answer; but she asked a surprising question.

"Have you a wife?" she demanded.

"No."

"Are you in love with any woman?"

"No."

"If I will spare your life and Madge's, will you make her your wife?"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Nick. "Is this a matrimonial agency in disguise?"

"Answer me!" she demanded harshly.

"Let's see, what was that question. It sounded a trifle odd, you know."

"If I will spare Madge's life and yours, will you marry her?" repeated the woman calmly.

The detective knew that if he should say "No" too abruptly, it might bring instant death upon him; so he temporized.

"She might have something to say about that herself," he ventured.

"Bah!" said Susan. "Madge will consent. She loves you."

"Madge loves me? You are dreaming, woman."

"If so, my dreams are true, Nick Carter."

"You are deceiving yourself."

"I am not. I know. But you have not answered me. Answer! Answer!"

"How can I say that I would do so when I don't know that she would even consider it."

"I have told you that she will consent."

"Yes; but what in blazes do you know about it. You're off your nut, old lady. You are, indeed! Bring Madge here and let her speak for herself. That is, if she is alive. I begin to believe that you have killed her, and that you are only playing with me."

"If she should consent, will you do the same?" demanded the woman, bending forward until her harsh face was within a few inches of his own.

"Bring her here if you wish an answer to your question," insisted the detective.

Without another word the woman wheeled in her tracks and left the room.

Five minutes later he could hear her toiling up the stairs as if she carried a heavy burden in her arms, and in another moment she was again in his presence, and this time she bore the senseless form of Madge Morley in her arms.

"She isn't hurt much," said Susan. "She is only unconscious. She'll come around in a few minutes."

She arranged Madge at the opposite side of the bed, seating her so that her back was against some pillows that were placed against the foot-board, and therefore so that she faced the detective; and her hands and feet were securely tied, so that to all intents and purposes she was as much a prisoner as Nick Carter himself.

When the arrangements were completed, Susan

brought some cologne with which she bathed Madge's face; and after a little the girl opened her eyes and stared around her.

Nick was, for once in his life, up against it hard. He was in a quandary.

"This takes the gold medal over any matrimonial agency that I ever heard of," he thought. "If Madge should happen to fall in with that old hag's views, what in the world am I to do?"

Madge smiled at him as soon as she realized the predicament they were in; and then she turned her eyes upon Susan, who had seated herself in a chair beside her and facing her.

"What does this mean, Susan?" she demanded sternly.

Susan grinned hideously upon her.

"I guess you can see what it means pretty well," she retorted. "I've got the money"—she held it up so they could both see it—"and I mean to keep it unless you both agree to my terms."

"Your terms?" said Madge. "Have you turned against me, Susan?"

"That is for you to say. You told me that you were in love with this man. Was it true? If it was not, I will kill him; if it was true, he has got to make you his wife, or I will kill him anyhow. Was it true?"

"Yes," replied Madge, in a faint voice.

Susan turned triumphantly to the detective.

"Do you hear that?" she demanded.

"Yes," said Nick. "I heard it."

"If I will spare you both, will you marry her?"

Before Nick could reply, Madge interrupted.

"Leave us together for a few moments, Susan," she said. "We cannot escape. We are too tightly bound for that. Leave us alone together."

"Ten minutes," said Susan; and she left the room without a backward glance.

The instant she disappeared, Madge straightened herself where she sat, for it must be remembered that only her hands and feet were tied, and that her hands were in front of her body.

Then she edged forward until she was close beside the detective.

"Quick!" she whispered. "You have a penknife somewhere. In which pocket is it?"

"In the right hand pocket of my waistcoat," he replied.

"Keep talking," she said, "so that Susan will hear the sound of your voice if she is listening. Laugh. Do something."

While she was talking, and Nick was obeying her instructions, her fingers were searching the pocket he had indicated, and presently she brought forth the penknife.

With both hands—for they were bound together—she brought the knife to her lips and opened the blade with her teeth. It was a small silver knife, and it was very sharp.

"Now, Nick," she said, "take the handle of the knife in your mouth. Can you hold it—so—with your teeth?"

"Yes."

"Steady now."

She pressed the cords which bound her wrists against the keen edge of the blade, with the result that they were instantly severed. With her hands free, she seized the knife and cut the cords around her ankles. Then, springing to her feet, she slashed away at the rope that had been wound so many times around the detective's body, and presently he leaped to his feet, entirely free.

"Now," exclaimed Nick, "we will take the game into our own hands. Now we can face that crazy woman."

"*Face her!*" cried Madge. "You don't know her. She is worse than ten men. She is a demon when she is roused. Look! She left the money behind her. There it is. Put it in your pocket."

While she was talking, Madge sprang to the door and turned the key; then she shot a bolt into place, and then she stepped back, trembling, and waited.

"Why do you do that?" demanded Nick. "Let her come inside;" and he stepped forward to unfasten the door.

But Madge seized him.

"Don't!" she cried out. "Don't! Or, at least, wait a moment."

"Why?"

"Listen. She is coming."

It was true. The next moment Susan seized the door-knob on the outside, and at once discovered that the passage had been barred against her.

They heard her chuckle; then she called out:

"Freed yourselves, have you? Barred me out, have you? Think you've won, do you? I'll show you."

There was a moment of silence, and then a heavy object crashed against the door, and one of the panels flew into splinters, into the room.

Another blow, and the hole was made larger; and then, before Nick Carter had time to even guess what Susan intended to do next, she thrust one long, bony arm through the aperture and fired a revolver three times in quick succession into the room.

The detective leaped aside the instant he saw the arm, for he also saw that the hand held a weapon.

That act probably saved his life; but a low moan and the sound of a heavy fall behind him made him turn.

Madge was lying at full length on the floor, and he knew that one or more of the bullets had struck her.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRISON IN THE CELLAR.

The readers of these histories who have followed Nick Carter through many of his experiences know that there are times when he lets himself loose without regard to consequences. This was one of those times.

When he saw Madge lying upon the floor with blood flowing from a wound in her side, and realized that in all probability she was dead, he forgot in that instant all the wickedness of her past, and remembered that not only had she professed to love him, but that in reality she had saved his life—now at the sacrifice of her own—by her quick wit in seeking for and finding the knife with which they had cut their way to liberty.

All this occurred to him in a flash of thought, while that bony arm and bonier hand were still outstretched through the hole in the door, and while the fingers were still snapping viciously at the trigger of the self-acting revolver which had evidently held only three bullets.

He leaped forward and seized that arm. He pulled it through as far as it would come—until the woman on the other side of the door was pulled up against it closely, and so that she could not escape.

Then he held it there with his left hand, while with his right he first shot back the bolt and then turned the key.

Then, still holding the woman so that she could not escape, he pulled the door open, drawing her into the room with it; and finally he released her arm suddenly, and seizing her around the body he whirled her into the room, and drawing her arms together behind her, he seized the rope with which he had himself been bound, and in two minutes more she was as helpless as he had been.

He found her strangely unresisting while he worked. She was almost passive in his hands, and at first he could not understand why it was so; but after a moment, when he had bound her securely, he discovered that she had seen the silent form of Madge lying on the floor, and that now she was gazing in horror upon the deed she had done.

Nick dragged her to the bed, and threw her roughly upon it; then he hastened to Madge and bent over her—and then, remembering that he had seen a doctor's sign only a few doors away from the house, he ran down the stairs and out upon the steps.

It was not yet nine o'clock. A policeman was just passing the house, and Nick called to him.

"There is a doctor four doors below here," he said. "Send him in here at once. Second floor front. Also ring for an ambulance instantly—the moment you can. I am Nick Carter."

He returned to Madge then. He tried to stanch the flow of blood, and he was still bending over her when the doctor arrived; and he stood by until the physician shook his head and announced that he was afraid the wound would prove to be mortal.

Then the ambulance came and Madge was borne away; and a little later the patrol-wagon arrived, and Susan, protesting loudly and swearing mightily, was carried to the station-house.

Two policemen remained with the detective to take charge of the house, and, having stationed one of them at the front door outside, Nick took the other one with him while he searched the premises.

A search of the second floor revealed nothing whatever.

They went to the third floor, and it was bare even of furniture, and the dust was thick upon everything.

They descended to the parlor floor, and here again Nick was doomed to disappointment.

There was no trace of Doris Granley anywhere.

With a sudden qualm of fear at his heart, the detective realized that Madge might never be able to speak again, and that Doris might be imprisoned in some place known only to her, where the poor girl would die of starvation or thirst before she could be rescued.

But the cellar remained unexplored, and he led the way down the stairs, the officer following.

At first he thought that their efforts here were destined to be fruitless also; but suddenly, as he advanced with his light in his hand, he uttered an exclamation of

surprise and pleasure, for he had found a stone-walled room in one corner—evidently a room that was originally intended for a wine-cellar.

A heavy door of hardwood guarded this room, and it was locked with a padlock on the outside.

"It is our only chance that she may be in there," he said.

"Who?" asked the officer. "What are you searching for?"

The detective did not reply.

Instead, he seized an iron bar—an old, discarded "jimmy" he discovered it was when he raised it in his hand—and with it he attacked the door.

In an instant the lock was pried away, and he pulled the door open and flashed his light inside that small and badly ventilated cellar-room.

There was a rug on the floor, a table and two chairs, a lamp, and a cot upon which Doris Granley was quietly sleeping.

But the instant when the light flashed into her eyes she awoke with a start, and then leaped to her feet with a loud cry of fright.

"Hush, Doris!" exclaimed Nick. "Don't be frightened. It is I—Nick Carter."

She was frightened no longer.

With a cry of joy she leaped toward him, and he took her into his arms tenderly.

"I knew that you would find me. I never doubted that you would rescue me," she said.

He led her up the stairs and into the back parlor, where there was a fire in the grate, and while she was warming herself he questioned her.

"Tell me all about it, Doris," he said. "How were you taken from your home so quietly?"

"It was Madge," she replied. "I was in my room reading. I had sent Agnes, my maid, to bed, for I knew that I should not want her again that night. When was it? What night was it?"

"Only last night, Doris," he replied.

"It seems like a week, a month, a year, to me."

"I don't doubt it. But continue with your story, child."

"I'm not a child. I'm going to marry Lawrence Hamilton," she smiled at him.

"Oh, well, I am glad of that. I suspected it. But you will always be a child to me. Now, go on."

"Well, I didn't hear the door of my room open, but all of a sudden I was conscious that I was not alone, and I raised my eyes to discover that Madge Morley was standing directly in front of me, and that she was pointing a pistol at my head."

"Yes?" said Nick.

"She told me that if I uttered a sound she would kill me, and I believed her. There was hatred in her eyes. She said that I loved you, and that I was going to marry you. Think of it. And that I should never have you. She would kill me first. I thought she would kill me, indeed."

"What next?"

"She made me hold my hands over my head. She went behind me and forced a towel between my teeth, and tied it behind my head. Then she gathered together some of my clothing—I don't know what—and then she made me walk to a back window and climb out of it and down a ladder, when we went out through the gate in the wall, and got into a carriage that was waiting.

"We drove a long way—a very long way—and then they took me into a deserted house, and finally into a room that was almost bare, but where there was a fire and a telephone.

"Madge took the gag from my mouth then, and she was about to say something to me when a bell rang, and she left the room, locking the door after her.

"I sprang to the telephone, and tried to use it; but I heard steps on the stairs and ran back to the couch before they entered the room. After a little the bell rang again, and the woman went out again; and once more I tried to use the telephone. But she returned silently, and caught me and dragged me away from it.

"This time a man came into the room with her, and they tied my feet together, and then my hands; and then, after awhile, the bell rang a third time, and they both went out.

"Bound as I was, I tried to get to the telephone again, and succeeded; but I had only said a few words to the girl at the central office when I was seized from behind.

"An hour later—there were two men with Madge then—they took me from the room, and imprisoned me in the cellar of another house—this house, where you found me; and—I am almost starved. I am, really. I think they must have forgotten me to-day."

"They have been kept rather busy to-day," replied Nick grimly. "But we will soon get something to eat."

He had sent one of the officers for a carriage, and

now it was announced. If the one he came there in had returned, the driver must have tired of waiting, for he had disappeared.

* * * * * * *

There are only a few more things to be told to end this story.

As soon as Nick had taken Doris to her home, none the worse for her experiences, he hurried to his own house, where he found his three assistants and Lawrence Hamilton awaiting him; and also three of the men he had so advantageously made use of during the shadowing operations of the afternoon.

The information that he received was that "Lord" Ashburton had been followed from the St. Denis Hotel to a barroom on Sixth Avenue, where it was thought better to arrest him at once. He was now in the Tombs.

The child who had come after the money had recovered her bag of peanuts, and with them and what she carried in her pockets had left a good trail to her home, which was, however, unnecessary, since it was an easy matter to follow her. The peanuts had only been resorted to in case an emergency should arise.

But, at her home, the Canadian, Gordon, was awaiting her—to receive the money in case there had been any slip in her delivering it; and he was taken into custody.

Then Nick's telephone-bell rang, and, replying to it, he received this message:

"It is not believed possible that Madge Morley can live. She is conscious, and has asked for you. Will you come?"

Nick replied that he would go at once. Then he turned and looked at his watch.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it is just midnight. This case was opened just twenty-four hours ago. It is now closed. Good night."

THE END.

The next issue of this weekly, No. 519, will be "Madge Morley's Ghost; or, Nick Carter's Desperate Fight."

ABOUT THE EARLY NUMBERS OF THE TIP TOP WEEKLY

We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 500 are entirely out of print. We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 180 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays." We give herewith a complete list of all stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

MEDAL LIBRARY

No.
150—Frank Merriwell's Schooldays.
167—Frank Merriwell's Chums.
178—Frank Merriwell's Foes.
184—Frank Merriwell's Trip West.
189—Frank Merriwell Down South.
193—Frank Merriwell's Bravery.
197—Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.
201—Frank Merriwell in Europe.
205—Frank Merriwell at Yale.
209—Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield.
213—Frank Merriwell's Races.
217—Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour.
225—Frank Merriwell's Courage.
229—Frank Merriwell's Daring.
233—Frank Merriwell's Athletes.
237—Frank Merriwell's Skill.
240—Frank Merriwell's Champions.
244—Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale.
247—Frank Merriwell's Secret.
251—Frank Merriwell's Danger.
254—Frank Merriwell's Loyalty.
258—Frank Merriwell in Camp.
262—Frank Merriwell's Vacation.
267—Frank Merriwell's Cruise.

MEDAL LIBRARY

No.
271—Frank Merriwell's Chase.
276—Frank Merriwell in Maine.
280—Frank Merriwell's Struggle.
284—Frank Merriwell's First Job.
288—Frank Merriwell's Opportunity.
292—Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck.
296—Frank Merriwell's Protegé.
300—Frank Merriwell on the Road.
304—Frank Merriwell's Own Company.
308—Frank Merriwell's Fame.
312—Frank Merriwell's College Chums.
316—Frank Merriwell's Problem.
320—Frank Merriwell's Fortune.
324—Frank Merriwell's New Comedian.
328—Frank Merriwell's Prosperity.
332—Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.
336—Frank Merriwell's Great Scheme.
340—Frank Merriwell in England.
344—Frank Merriwell on the Boulevards.
348—Frank Merriwell's Duel.
352—Frank Merriwell's Double Shot.
356—Frank Merriwell's Baseball Victories.
359—Frank Merriwell's Cunning.
362—Frank Merriwell's Auto.
365—Frank Merriwell's Fun.

The Price of the Merriwell Books is Ten Cents per Copy. At all Newsdealers

The Nick Carter Weekly

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY. **HANDSOMEST COLORED COVERS**

No other detective library contains stories that are half so interesting. Nick Carter has been all over the world and has had experience with all kinds of criminals.

That's why, boys, his adventures holds one's interest from cover to cover. There is no brutality in Nick's make-up—he does not need it—he uses his wits. Do not fail to get the latest number from your newsdealer.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, by the publishers to any address upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

496—The "Bad Man" of Nome; or, Nick Carter's Hunt in Alaska.
497—The Black Flag of Piracy; or, Nick Carter's Daring Rescue.
498—Following An Ocean Trail; or, Nick Carter's Chase After Pirates.
499—A Clue From the Clouds; or, Nick Carter's Mysterious Evidence.
500—Praxatel, of the Ironarm; or, Nick Carter Follows an Open Trail.
501—The Man From Montana; or, Nick Carter and the Cavern of Gold.
502—Ismalla, the Chieftain; or, Nick Carter Among the Barbarians.
503—Nick Carter's Earthquake Clue; or, Amidst Falling Walls.
504—Nick Carter Among the Bad Men; or, The Mystery of Injun Pete.
505—The Man of Many Faces; or, Nick Carter Behind the Scenes.
506—A Letter From the Dead; or, Nick Carter's Proudest Moment.
507—Bare-faced Jimmy, the Gentleman Crook; or, Nick Carter's Amazing Experiment.
508—The Gentleman Crook's Last Act; or, Nick Carter and the Haunted House.
509—The "Skidoo" of the K. U. & T.; or, Nick Carter's Great Train Robbery Case.
510—The Last of the Outlaws; or, How Nick Carter Stopped the "Cannon-ball."
511—Nick Carter's Twin Mystery; or, The Secret of the Green Automobile.
512—A Battle of Wits; or, Nick Carter's Fight for Life.
513—A Game of Five Millions; or, Nick Carter's Fight With a Fiend.
514—Codman the Poisoner; or, Nick Carter's Strangest Experience.
515—The Plot of the Poisoner; or, Nick Carter's Hairbreadth Escape.
516—The Mechanical Giant; or, Ten-Ichi Plays a Lone Hand.
517—Doris, the Unknown; or, Nick Carter's Blindfold Mystery.
518—A Dangerous Woman; or, Nick Carter Faces a Crisis.
519—Madge Morley's Ghost; or, Nick Carter's Desperate Fight.
520—An Automobile Mystery; or, Nick Carter's Bloodhound on the Scent.
521—The Mysterious Stranger; or, Nick Carter's Complex Case.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want, and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
.....copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
.....copies of "NICK CARTER" Nos.....
.....copies of BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
.....copies of "DIAMOND DICK" Nos.....
.....copies of WORK AND WIN Nos.....

Name.....

Street and No.....

City and State.....

DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY

ISSUED EVERY THURSDAY. **BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS**

Diamond Dick and his son, Bertie, are true men of the Western plains. They are noble-hearted fellows who don't impose on the weaker man and who don't let anyone else do it if they can help it.

You ought to read how they clean up a mining camp of the dishonest gamblers and other toughs who usually prey on the uneducated miners.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, by the publishers to any address upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

500—Diamond Dick's Midnight Duel; or, The Girl Bandit of Powder River.
501—Diamond Dick On His Nerve; or, The Oath of the Inner Circle.
502—Diamond Dick At the Wheel; or, A Race With Death on the Mississippi.
503—Diamond Dick's Show-Down; or, Calling a Bad Man's Bluff.
504—Diamond Dick's Strange Guest; or, The Outlaw Marksman of Arkansas.
505—Diamond Dick's Hit and Miss; or, The Man With Six Notches On His Gun.
506—Diamond Dick's Fight For a Girl; or, The Tenderfoot of Bellair Gulch.
507—Diamond Dick's Underground Trail; or, The Yellow Demon of the Sierras.
508—Diamond Dick's Cross-Counter; or, A Big Battle for the Belt.
509—Diamond Dick's Good Right Hand; or, A Dark Plot in Chinatown.
510—Diamond Dick's Bravery; or, The Three Amazons of the Mojave.
511—Diamond Dick's Double Trail; or, The Apparition of the Big Tree.
512—Diamond Dick in the Saddle; or, The Secret of the Steel Glove.
513—Diamond Dick's Greatest Peril; or, The Strange Hobo of Death Valley.
514—Diamond Dick's Outlaw Duel; or, The Bronco-buster of the Pecos.
515—Diamond Dick's Mystic Mark; or, The Handkerchief Man's Vendetta.
516—Diamond Dick's Race Riot; or, A Hot Brush in Mexico.
517—Diamond Dick's Ghostly Round-up; or, The Phantom Steer of K-Bar-6.
518—Diamond Dick's Big Drive; or, Holding Them Down in a Blizzard.
519—Diamond Dick's Trail of Vengeance; or, Tracked to the Rio Grande.
520—Diamond Dick Holds the Fort; or, Hot Work Along the Big River.
521—Diamond Dick's Steel Glove; or, The Smiling Man From Santa Fé.
522—Diamond Dick's No-name Mystery; or, The Smiling Man's Bad Mistake.
523—Diamond Dick's Midnight Stampede; or, The Horse-thieves of the Cimarron.
524—Diamond Dick's Forlorn Hope; or, The Siege of Adobe Castle.
525—Diamond Dick's Night Watch; or, The Pretty Girl of Falling Rock.
526—Diamond Dick's Three To One; or, Backed By Uncle Sam.
527—Diamond Dick's Golden Quest; or, The Secret of Snake River.
528—Diamond Dick's Long Leap; or, Single-handed Against a Giant.
529—Diamond Dick's Heiress Hunt; or, A Dash Through the Big Divide.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us and we will send them to you by return mail. **POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.**

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. 190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
..... " " NICK CARTER Nos.....
..... " " DIAMOND DICK Nos.....
.....copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
..... " " BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
..... " " BOLDH RIDER Nos.....

Name..... Street and No..... Town..... State.....

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY. **BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS**

Buffalo Bill wins his way into the heart of every one who reads these strong stories of stirring adventure on the wide prairies of the West.

Boys, if you want tales of the West that are drawn true to life, do not pass these by.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, by the publishers to any address upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

267—Buffalo Bill in the Cañon of Death; or, Ringed In by Navajos.
268—Buffalo Bill and Billy the Kid; or, The Desperadoes of Apache Land.
269—Buffalo Bill and the Robber Ranch King; or, The White Tarantula of Texas.
270—Buffalo Bill in the Land of Wonders; or, The Mad Chief of the Madocs.
271—Buffalo Bill and the Traitor Soldier; or, Fair Inez, the Pearl of the Post.
272—Buffalo Bill's Dusky Trailers; or, The Bandits at Bay.
273—Buffalo Bill's Diamond Mine; or, The Bedouins of the Plains.
274—Buffalo Bill and the Pawnee Serpent; or, The Vendetta of Death.
275—Buffalo Bill's Scarlet Hand; or, The Accusing Blood Stain.
276—Buffalo Bill Running the Gantlet; or, The Wolves of the Emigrant Trail.
277—Buffalo Bill's Leap in the Dark; or, The Outcast of Santibell.
278—Buffalo Bill's Daring Plunge; or, The Grisly Ghost of Mahoe.
279—Buffalo Bill's Desperate Mission; or, The Round-up in Hidden Valley.
280—Buffalo Bill's Ghost Raid; or, Hot Times at Bubble Pricking.
281—Buffalo Bill's Traitor Guide; or, The Vengeance of Alkali Pete.
282—Buffalo Bill's Camp-fires; or, The Bad Man of Snake River Crossing.
283—Buffalo Bill Up a Stump; or, The Pawnee Faker of the Bitter Root.
284—Buffalo Bill's Secret Foe; or, The Wizard of Windy Gulch.
285—Buffalo Bill's Master-stroke; or, The Specter of Death Valley.
286—Buffalo Bill and the Masked Mystery; or, Teton John, the Half-breed.
287—Buffalo Bill and the Brazos Terror; or, The Lone Star Outlaws.
288—Buffalo Bill's Dance of Death; or, The Night Hawks of Snake River.
289—Buffalo Bill and the Creeping Terror; or, The Black Spider of the Shoshones.
290—Buffalo Bill and the Brand of Cain; or, The Wandering Jew of the Plains.
291—Buffalo Bill and the Mad Millionaire; or, The Redskin Rovers.
292—Buffalo Bill's Medicine-lodge; or, The White Queen of the Kickapoos.
293—Buffalo Bill in Peril; or, The Red Amazons of the Niobrarah.
294—Buffalo Bill's Strange Pard; or, Wolfer Joe on the War-path.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. 190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
..... " " NICK CARTER Nos.....
..... " " DIAMOND DICK Nos.....
.....copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
..... " " BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
..... " " ROUGH RIDER Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....

THE TIP TOP WEEKLY

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY **HANDSOME COLORED COVERS**

Never has Burt L. Standish written such interesting tales of the adventures of the Merriwell brothers, Frank and Dick, as are now appearing in this weekly. Mr. Standish has a world-wide circle of friends and he is putting forth his best efforts to amuse and entertain them. Boys, you have no idea of what a grand feast he is preparing for you. Tip Top's stories are going to astonish you. Do not fail to get it.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, by the publishers upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

528—Dick Merriwell Dared; or, The Grapple at Wellsburg.
529—Dick Merriwell's Dismay; or, The Departure of June.
530—Frank Merriwell's Son; or, The Mark of the Star.
531—Frank Merriwell's Old Flock; or, The Reunion at Merry House.
532—Frank Merriwell's House-Party; or, The Rustle with the Rovers.
533—Dick Merriwell's Summer Team; or, Baseball in the Blue Hills.
534—Dick Merriwell's Demand; or, The Draw at Madawaska.
535—Dick Merriwell's Slabmate; or, The Boy from Bloomfield.
536—Frank Merriwell's Summer Camp; or, The Athletic-school in the Woods.
537—Frank Merriwell's Proposal; or, Starting the Sport in the League.
538—Frank Merriwell's Spook-hunters; or, The Mysterious Island of Mad Lake.
539—Dick Merriwell's "Check; or, The Hot Punch From Happy Camp.
540—Dick Merriwell's Sacrifice; or, Team Work That Told.
541—Dick Merriwell's Heart; or, Breaking the Hard Luck Streak.
542—Frank Merriwell's New Auto; or, The Lure to Destruction.
543—Frank Merriwell's Pride; or, The Double-Header at Pineville.
544—Frank Merriwell's Young Winners; or, The Stars in the Blue Hills.
545—Dick Merriwell's Lead; or, Bound to Hold First Place.
546—Dick Merriwell's Influence; or, On the Right Road At Last.
547—Dick Merriwell's Top Notch; or, Against Odds, Fate, and Scheming.
548—Frank Merriwell's Kids; or, The World Beaters In New York.
549—Frank Merriwell's Kodakers; or, Hunting Big Game Without Guns.
550—Dick Merriwell, Freshman; or, First Days at Yale.
551—Dick Merriwell's Progress; or, The First Chance on the Field.
552—Dick Merriwell, Half-back; or, Getting into the Game at Last.
553—Dick Merriwell's Resentment; or, In Defense of His Honor.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. **POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.**

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. 190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
..... " " NICK CARTER Nos.....
..... " " DIAMOND DICK Nos.....
.....copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
..... " " BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
..... " " ROUGH RIDER Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....

THE FAVORITE LIST
OF FIVE-CENT LIBRARIES

Nick Carter Weekly

We know, boys, that there is no need of introducing to you Nicholas Carter, the greatest detective that ever lived. Every number containing the adventures of Nick Carter has a peculiar, but delightful power of fascination.

ROUGH RIDER WEEKLY

Ted Strong was appointed deputy marshal by accident, but he resolves to use his authority and rid his ranch of some very tough bullies. He does it in such a slick way that everyone calls him "King of the Wild West" and he certainly deserves his title. $100 in cash are given to the readers of this publication, every three months. Buy a copy and learn how to come in for a share of it.

BRAVE AND BOLD

Every boy who prefers variety in his reading matter, ought to be a reader of Brave and Bold. All these were written by authors who are past masters in the art of telling boys' stories. Every tale is complete in itself.

MIGHT AND MAIN

These are stories of the adventures of boys who succeeded in climbing the ladder of fame by honest effort. No more interesting tales can be imagined. Each number is at least one-third longer than the ordinary five-cent library.

DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY

The demand for stirring stories of Western adventure is admirably filled by this library. Every up-to-date boy ought to read just how law and order are established and maintained on our Western plains by Diamond Dick, Bertie, and Handsome Harry.

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

Buffalo Bill is the hero of a thousand exciting adventures among the Redskins. These are given to our boys only in the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are bound to interest and please you.

BOWERY BOY LIBRARY

The adventures of a poor waif whose only name is "Bowery Billy." Billy is the true product of the streets of New York. No boy can read the tales of his trials without imbibing some of that resource and courage that makes the character of this homeless boy stand out so prominently.

The Tip Top Weekly

Frank Merriwell and his brother Dick are known and loved by over one hundred and fifty thousand of the best boys in the United States. They are both clean-cut, vigorous fellows who dare to do right no matter what the consequences. Get the current number. We are sure you will like it.